MY SECOND COUNTRY

MY SECOND COUNTRY (FRANCE)

By ROBERT DELL

"La France de Voltaire et de Montesquieu—
celle-là est la grande, la vraie France."
—ANATOLE FRANCE.

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TO A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FRANCE OF THE FUTURE, MY INTERNATIONAL GRANDSON, GILLES-JACQUES SOURIAU, BORN ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE PARIS COMMUNE.

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INTRODUCTION

THE title of this book has not been chosen at random: it is literally true. France has been my home for more than twelve years, but it was already my second country long before I went to live there. Indeed I cannot remember a time when France had not a large place in my affections. Among my earliest recollections are the pictures of the Franco-German War of 1870 in the bound volumes of the *Illustrated London News* which we had at home. Perhaps my elders who showed and explained the pictures to me were themselves Francophile; they must have been, or how should I at that early age have been filled, as I was, with enthusiasm for the cause of France and indignation at the wrongs that she had suffered? Later on Victor Hugo and Swinburne intensified my love and admiration for France and gave it a more reasoned basis; France became for me the country of the Revolution, the symbol of democracy and republicanism. Since then my opinions on almost every subject have changed more than once, as must the opinions of any man that has lived more than fifty years in this world, unless his existence has been that of a vegetable, but the enthusiasm for revolutionary and republican France has never changed or diminished.

The love of France in the abstract took a concrete form as I came to know French people. I went to live in France of my own choice, not because any

stays in various country districts have enabled me to know the peasants and that admirable body of men and women to whom France owes so much—the country school teachers. The more I know the French people the fonder I become of them. Like all human beings, they have the defects of their qualities, but they have one quality which makes them the most charming people in the world to live with—they understand the art of living.

In these pages, which are intended to be a slight contribution to the study of some aspects of French life, attention will be drawn to certain defects, as they seem to me, in French institutions and methods. I shall make no apology for drawing attention to them. Their existence is recognized by all the thoughtful Frenchmen that I know, although they would not all agree as to their causes and possible remedies. Indeed, if I venture to write about them, it is only because I have been repeatedly urged to do so by French friends who have been good enough to say that my peculiar position enables me to combine the detachment of an outsider with some amount of inside knowledge. Their opinion is, no doubt, too flattering, but at least I can claim to speak with sincerity and sympathy. The first suggestion of a book of this kind was made to me before the war. So long as the war continued it would have been inopportune, but at this critical moment in the history of France, when she will need all her intellectual and material resources to recover from the terrible blows which the war has dealt her, it is useful to consider what changes may be necessary to the solution of the vast and difficult problem of reconstruction. The political situation in France appears to me to give every sign that she is nearing the end of a régime. I do not believe that the political

institutions which have now existed for nearly fifty years can survive, without radical alterations, the social and economic upheaval which the war has brought about in Europe. They have never worked satisfactorily, for they were falsified in their origin, and the war has revealed in a glaring light their fundamental inconsistencies. In some other than political respects France is behind the times and drastic changes are needed if she is to recover herself and hold her own in the world. Much may be hoped from the marvellous recuperative power of the French people, of which so striking an example was given after 1871; but the injury inflicted on France by the war of 1870 was trivial in comparison with that which the war just ended has inflicted upon her. All the good sense and all the intelligence of the French people will be needed to repair that injury. And this time, if the recovery is to be as complete as it was half a century ago, there must be a far more searching examination into economic and political conditions and far more drastic measures must be taken with abuses and with the obstacles to progress raised by the obscurantist conservatism of certain classes. If, in however small a degree, I can contribute to the necessary examination, I shall feel that I have repaid a fraction of the debt which I owe to the country which I have chosen as my home and in which I hope to spend the rest of my days.

ROBERT DELL.

LONDON, 29 *September*, 1919

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CHAPTER I

THE FRENCH CHARACTER

British opinion in regard to France has completely changed since the war. Before the war the French were popularly regarded in England as a frivolous people. Most Englishmen's knowledge of France was derived from trips to Paris, often undertaken for the purpose of indulging in amusements which their reputation for respectability and an observant conjugal eye prevented them from enjoying in London, Manchester, or Birmingham, although those places give just as many opportunities for them in a rather more sordid form. Nothing has amused me more than the comments of English friends on the immorality of France, comments made with a sublime unconsciousness of the fact that, if they found what they call immorality in Paris, it was for the reason that they would find it in any large town, namely, because they went to look for it. For them France was Paris; and Paris was the Grand Boulevard, the showy restaurants, the Folies Bergère and the night cafés in the neighbourhood of the Place Pigalle. The French were, therefore, a people in the habit of sitting up in cafés half the night with hospitable

ladies on their knees. Hence the legend that the French were frivolous and dissolute. In fact, they are an extremely serious and hardworking people, less eager for amusements than the English and more capable of amusing themselves. Nowadays too many English people never seem happy without set amusement; they must be at a theatre, a music-hall, or at least a cinematograph. The braying band in nearly every London restaurant betrays the sad fact that conversation is a lost art. In France it is still the amusement that all intelligent people like best, for in France even smart society has not killed conversation by declaring it "bad form" to talk about anything but golf or the idiosyncrasies of one's acquaintances. The French are gay, they are witty, but they are less frivolous than the English in the true sense of the term. Young Frenchmen perhaps took life too seriously even before the war; they have had too much reason for taking it seriously during the last five years.

According to popular legend before the war, the French were not only frivolous and immoral, they were also a decadent race. It must be admitted that this legend was encouraged by certain political parties in France and by their organs in the Press. The French reactionary papers, in their hatred for the Republic, had been preaching for years that republican institutions had demoralised their country and reduced it to decadence. For some reason, which I have never been able to fathom, foreign correspondents in France quote almost exclusively the reactionary Press; it is not, therefore, surprising that foreign opinion was misled. The result of these errors was general amazement in England and other foreign countries at the way in which the French people rallied to the defence of France and at their heroic conduct in the war.

These decadents turned out to be the best soldiers in the world. More than once the bravery of the French soldiers alone saved the Allies from defeat; the defence of Verdun will ever be counted one of the most splendid examples of human courage and tenacity in the history of the world.

Nobody that knew France was surprised. More than ten years ago, when the 17th Regiment refused to fire on the revolting wine-growers in the South of France, I protested in an article published in the London *Nation* against the deduction that the soldiers of that regiment would refuse to defend France against attack. I maintained, on the contrary, that their conduct was a proof of superior intelligence which would make them all the better soldiers in a cause which they believed to be just. They held that they had been called upon for military service only for the purpose of national defence, and they refused quite rightly to be used as a police force against their own relatives and friends. As citizen-soldiers they regarded themselves as free men and not as slaves. The war has justified my opinion.

French reactionaries have tried to account for a phenomenon which belied their prophecies by the theory of beneficent war which changes hearts and characters by a miracle. Miracles do not happen and a great crisis such as the war does not change people: it reveals their true characters. In France, as elsewhere, the war has shown people as they really are—has laid bare their qualities and defects. On the whole, it has not given us in any country a very pleasing view of human nature, but it has at least proved that the French are not a decadent race.

The discovery that they are not has caused English opinion suddenly to veer round from one

extreme to the other—from ill-informed criticism to equally ill-informed and indiscriminating laudation. Frivolous and immoral France has become a sort of hermaphrodite deity made up of Joan d'Arc and M. Clemenceau. I am not sure that this extravagant adulation is more complimentary to the French than the extravagant depreciation of the past, for the latter at least allowed them to be human. The present attitude of the British public towards France is rather like that of those men who regard women as angels too good for this world, and consequently treat them as imbeciles. Some fate will have it that we in England almost invariably praise the French for qualities that they do not possess and blame them for defects which are not theirs—or else applaud their defects and condemn their qualities.

Perhaps it is not surprising after all that the French are not understood by other peoples, for they are not easy to understand. The French character is a paradox: it combines elements apparently opposed to one another. For instance, the French in the majority are conservative in all that matters, but at the same time they are ruthlessly iconoclast and indifferent to historical associations. So there is no country in which such closeness in money matters and such generosity are to be found side by side, sometimes in the same individuals. Again, one of the most striking qualities of the French is their innate good sense; it is most conspicuous perhaps in the peasants, but most Frenchmen have in them something of the peasant. The bourgeois[1] is usually the descendant of

[1] I shall use the terms "bourgeois" and "bourgeoisie" throughout this book. They have almost become English words and there are no synonyms for them. The term "middle class" is not a synonym for the bourgeoisie, which includes the upper class. (See page 26.)

peasants and so is the workman of the towns; both retain traces of the soil. This good sense is conspicuous in all the ordinary affairs of daily life. It is rationalist, even materialist—as positivist as the philosophy of Auguste Comte, that essentially French intellect. But in politics the good sense of the Frenchman often seems to desert him and he becomes the sport of words and phrases. This is more true of the bourgeoisie than of the other classes and least true of the peasantry; even in politics the peasant retains his shrewd scepticism and sense of realities. The bourgeois has suffered from a too purely literary education which has made him attach more importance to words than to things. The total ignorance of economic questions, for example, that one finds even among Frenchmen of high intelligence and great knowledge is astonishing. Nowhere is that ignorance more general than among politicians; not one of the most prominent men in French politics outside the Socialist party, except M. Caillaux, has any real knowledge of economics or seems to pay much attention to them. M. Clemenceau is a case in point. His greatest admirer would not venture to say that he ever grasped even the elementary data of an economic problem or ever thought it worth while to try to do so; his attitude towards such problems is purely romantic and literary. Oratory, too, has a fatal influence in French politics; French orators are many, and among them are some consummate artists—M. Briand, for instance. The taste for rhetoric is as dangerous as a craving for drugs and has much the same effect on the mind as have drugs on the body. Hence the tendency to desert realities for metaphysical abstractions which leads a Chamber of Deputies to greet with frantic applause the declaration of a Minister that France is "the

most beautiful moral person" that the world has ever seen. Hence, too, the obsession of victory as a sort of metaphysical conception, an end in itself, which led to a disastrous refusal to count the cost of victory or to consider its practical results. And now that the victory has been won, French good sense reasserts itself, too late, in the declaration of M. Clemenceau that it is only a Pyrrhic victory for France.

Probably in no country is the level of individual intelligence so high as in France; certainly in none is the interest in intellectual matters so widespread. The contrast with England in this regard is very marked. In England knowledge and intellect are regarded with suspicion by the majority of people and any manifestation of them is bad form in polite society. If a "gentleman" happens to be learned or intellectual, it is his business to hide the fact and pretend to be interested in golf scores or cricketing records. The arid waste of the London suburbs is weekly refreshed by numerous periodical publications chiefly devoted to the movements of titled people and to photographs of duchesses and their babies. Such papers would have no readers in France, where nobody knows the name of a duke unless he should happen to be remarkable for something else than his title, but where the names of great artists, great writers, great savants, and great men of science are household words. The only aristocracy that counts in France is the intellectual aristocracy. When in England has any great man of letters been the object of popular adoration like that given to Victor Hugo and Béranger, who could hardly walk the streets of Paris without being mobbed? Where except in Paris would a taxi-driver refuse to take his fare from a great writer, saying that it was enough to

have the honour of driving Anatole France? If there were an Anatole France in London no taxi-driver would know him by sight. The Parisian *midinette* makes pilgrimages to the grave of the original "Dame aux Camélias" in Montmartre cemetery and lays violets on the tomb of Abélard and Heloïse in Père-Lachaise. Nothing more endears to one the French people than their passionate cult of genius and their immense respect for intellectual superiority. But, like all human qualities, this respect for intellect has its drawbacks; literature and men of letters have had too great an influence in France. Their influence is one of the causes of the excessive importance attached to words and to ideas in themselves. It has led to a notion that, when one has had a fine idea and has expressed it in fine language, one has done all that is necessary. It may be true that the success of the Germans was in great measure due to their faculty for giving practical expression to the ideas of others, and that may be, as the French are inclined to think, a proof of inferiority. But that faculty is likely to prove more profitable in this world of hard facts than a capacity for producing ideas without the power of giving them practical application. The mission of the French has been to provide the world with ideas. It is a noble mission which makes the existence of the French more important to the world than that of any other nation; but the practical application of the ideas has sometimes been the work of other peoples.

Perhaps the excessive influence of the written or spoken word accounts, at least in part, for one of the greatest French paradoxes—the striking contrast between individual and collective intelligence. All collectivities are less intelligent than most of the individuals that compose them; for some reason

which has never yet been satisfactorily explained, the intellectual and moral level of the crowd is never higher, and often lower, than that of the least intelligent and least moral individuals of which it is composed. The war has proved that. All men except the very lowest are better than their Church or nation. The greatest crimes in history have been committed, not by individuals, but by Churches and States, and even Christians attribute to their God barbarities of which none of them would be individually capable; for gods have the mentality of the crowd. All human progress is due to the revolt of the individual against the collectivity; in other words, to the revolt of reason against faith. Faith is essentially an attribute of the crowd and the faith of each individual really depends on that of the others. Hence the extraordinary manifestations of collective credulity which appear at all periods of great tension, such as the year 1000 and the recent war. The myth of the Russians in England was a striking example which showed that the mentality of the crowd is much the same in the twentieth century as it was in the tenth. Nowhere is this contrast between individual and collective intelligence so marked as in France. Whereas the French are individually more intelligent than any other people and are conspicuous for their good sense, they are collectively inferior in both qualities to some other peoples whose individual level is lower than theirs. This explains certain phenomena in French politics which invariably puzzle the foreigner with a knowledge of France, who cannot understand how people so intelligent and sensible individually can be so easily led astray by political will-o'-the-wisps and induced to forget realities in the pursuit of abstractions.

The French respect for intellect is perhaps a manifestation of their essentially democratic spirit. More than any other people they judge a man by his capacities rather than by the accidents of birth or fortune. They are remarkably free from the snobbery which is so prominent a characteristic of the English and the Americans; there is *snobisme* in France, but that is not the same thing. What there is not is the ludicrous respect for titles and descent. Here, however, one must distinguish. One of the greatest obstacles to the real understanding of France is the great difference between the various classes on the one hand and the various parts of the country on the other. The ancient provinces, abolished legally, survive in fact and are inhabited by different races. The old natural patriotism—the attachment of a man to the village or the town or the province where he was born—has not been eradicated by the mystical patriotism invented by the Revolution.[1] Again, in no country is the difference between the classes so great as in France; the gulf between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is so wide that they are almost like two nations. For these reasons it is very difficult to generalise about the French character. A common civilisation, common political institutions, and a common educational system have produced certain characteristics which may be called national, since they are prevalent all over France, but even they are not universal. No true judgment can be formed about France without taking into account the regional and class differences. One has to ask not merely whether a man is a Frenchman, but also from what part of France he comes and whether he is a bourgeois, a peasant, or a workman. To give an example, the question

[1] See page 174.

whether the French are a sober or a drunken people cannot be answered by a simple affirmative or negative. In the wine-growing districts they are sober on the whole, and what drunkenness there has been was chiefly due to absinthe, the manufacture of which is now suppressed. In Normandy, Brittany, and French Flanders, which have the misfortune to have no wine, drunkenness is very prevalent. For wine maketh glad the heart of man, but spirits make him drunk and too much beer makes him stupid.

One of the mistakes most often made by foreigners is that of identifying France with Paris. In fact, Paris is strangely unlike the rest of France and the Parisian is a type apart, very different from other Frenchmen. He that knows only Paris does not know France. Parisians are recruited from every part of France; every one of the races that make up the French people is represented among them and there is a constant immigration into Paris from the provinces. If the population of Paris (the city within the fortifications) rose from 1,851,792 in 1872 to 2,888,110 in 1911, the increase was certainly not due to excess of births over deaths, which is smaller in Paris than in France generally—indeed, there is sometimes in Paris an excess of deaths over births. It was due to immigration from France itself, for the foreign population of the department of the Seine was actually slightly smaller in 1911 than it had been in 1886. In the second generation at least the provincials that settle in Paris become Parisians—indeed, the immigrants themselves often undergo the change and become indistinguishable from "Parisiens de Paris." The faculty of assimilation which is a characteristic of France as a whole is peculiarly strong in Paris. Of course, no country is really represented by its capital. Since the

capital is the seat of government and the centre of pleasure-seeking, the proportion of wealthy people is always much larger in the capital than elsewhere, especially of wealthy people with no occupation. Nowhere in England is there so large an idle class as in London. In every capital there is an exceptionally large number of parasites and hangers-on of the ruling classes and the rich and a large miscellaneous and more or less worthless population. The capital is often the spoiled child of the Government; at any rate it comes in for most of the official fêtes and functions. Perhaps this is the reason why the capital of a country is usually more patriotic than the rest; it may be that London tends to be Imperialist and Paris to be Chauvinist because the Londoners and the Parisians see most of the outward pomp and show of imperialism and militarism.

Nowhere is the contrast between the country and its capital so marked as in France, yet nowhere has the capital so much power and influence. Paris is the heart of France in a sense in which no other capital is the heart of the country. It is also, or claims to be, to a great extent the brain of France. The whole intellectual and artistic life of France has been concentrated in Paris, just as the whole of French government and administration has been centralised there. During the nineteenth century Paris completely dominated France politically and intellectually. It was Paris that dethroned Charles X on July 29, 1830, Louis-Philippe on February 24, 1848, and Napoleon III on September 4, 1870. It was Paris that set up the Second and Third Republics. To this day Paris governs France through the centralised administration.[1] The dictatorship of Paris has on the whole done more harm than good. It is said that, when

[1] See pages 77–86

Blucher's officers expressed a desire to destroy Paris, he replied to them: "Laissez-la; la France en crévera." Blucher may have exaggerated, but without doubt the influence of Paris has often been mischievous. For the Parisians have many of the defects which have often been erroneously attributed to the French people as a whole—or rather a large part of the Parisian population has. There is in Paris a large population that is impulsive, frivolous and emotional. Paris always has been more Chauvinist and bellicose than any other part of France. Paris is chiefly responsible for most of the wars in which France has been involved since 1815. The Parisian boulevardiers, the audiences at Parisian music-halls, are usually militarist in sympathy—"cocardier," as the French say. Until the last decade of the nineteenth century even the Parisian proletariat was always clamouring for a spirited foreign policy; it has changed to a great extent, thanks to the influence of Socialism, but the Parisian bourgeoisie is still more Chauvinist than any other. And in Paris, as in every capital, the proportion of bourgeois, and in particular of the idle rich class, to the population is, of course, larger than anywhere else in France. The influence of the Parisian Press—of the "great papers," that is to say—is very bad. It is to a large extent corrupt and its news is often tendencious or even false. Newspapers have far more influence by means of their news than by their leading articles. The reader, who knows the politics of the paper, is on his defence against a leading article; he has no defence against news, for he has no means of knowing whether the facts have been distorted or suppressed or even invented. Some of the leading Parisian papers do not hesitate deliberately to concoct news; I know a man who left a Parisian

news agency after two or three days because he was asked to invent telegrams from abroad in order to support a particular policy. It is, of course, the Parisian papers which are quoted abroad, but they are far from representing French opinion as a whole. That is one reason why France is so often wrongly judged in other countries. The great Parisian papers represent Parisian bourgeois opinion and high finance. Since 1899 the political influence of Paris has been on the wane. When M. Loubet was elected President of the Republic in that year, Paris was violently anti-Dreyfusard and reactionary. The first municipal elections after his accession to office resulted in a sweeping reactionary victory in Paris and in the defeat of the reactionaries in every other large town; that was the first symptom of the revolt of the provinces against the dictatorship of Paris, which has since developed. It has been particularly marked in the South of France, which refuses to take its orders from Paris. Indeed, during the Waldeck-Rousseau and Combes Ministries (1899–1905) the provinces began to impose their political will on Paris and the power of the centralised administration became considerably diminished. The deputies received instructions from their constituents which they were obliged to follow, and they in their turn exercised a control over the Executive such as had never before been known in France. Since 1905 the Executive has regained its power, but the provinces still refuse to take their politics from Paris. This change is due to the increase of the industrial population, to the growth of the large towns, to the improved communications which have enabled the provinces to be better informed, to the development of the provincial Press, especially the great provincial dailies, and to a growing opinion in

favour of decentralisation. Intellectual and artistic decentralisation has also begun and it seems likely that the control of France by Paris will, before long, be a thing of the past. It will be a change for the better. Much that has been mistaken in French policy has been due to the impulsiveness and waywardness of the capital and will be corrected by the solid good sense of the provinces. The South will continue to have great influence on France. Languedoc in particular has always produced men combining idealism with practical capacity and good sense—perhaps more great men have come from Languedoc than from any other province.

The democratic spirit is a matter about which one must not generalise too much: for it is a characteristic rather of the peasantry and the proletariat than of the bourgeoisie. Here it may be said that the term bourgeoisie is used throughout this book in its strict sense, namely, as a description of all that are not either peasants or wage-earners. The bourgeois is a man who owns property as distinct from a man who lives entirely on his earnings. The peasant may, of course, and usually does in France, own property, but the peasantry is a class by itself with its own characteristics. Under the old regime the bourgeoisie was also distinguished from the noblesse, but the latter class has ceased to count in France, except so far as it has become merged in the *grande bourgeoisie*—the wealthy financial, commercial and industrial class. Half the people that profess nowadays to belong to the noblesse are merely bourgeois who were given titles under the Empires or the Restoration, have bought them from the Pope or from some minor foreign Sovereign, or have simply conferred them upon themselves. Moreover, people belonging to a

family of which some member was ennobled before the Revolution do not hesitate, when the direct line is extinct, to revive the title in their own favour, although they may be only remote collateral descendants of the original holder. Now that no titles are recognised by law, anybody can assume one; it is said that most of the titles used by gentlemen in the French Diplomatic Service were acquired in this simple fashion. The remnant of the old noblesse still has certain characteristics which differ from those of the bourgeoisie, sometimes for the better, but it has so completely isolated itself from the life of France by its persistent obscurantism and reaction that it need not be taken into account, and it is really merged in the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie as a whole is, then, much less democratic than the two other classes. The tendency on the part of the *nouveaux riches* to call themselves counts or marquises is evidence of that fact, but here again one must distinguish. There are really three classes of bourgeoisie, the upper, the middle, and the lower. The upper bourgeoisie consists of the great financiers, the remnant of the noblesse, and the wealthy capitalists generally; the middle bourgeoisie is composed of professional men, artists, men of letters, the higher Government officials, professors, and well-to-do *rentiers* and business men; in the lower class—the *petite bourgeoisie*—are the small *rentiers* and tradesmen, minor Government officials, elementary teachers and business employees. The very small tradesmen and shop assistants belong rather to the proletariat. A large section of bourgeois society is what would be called in England or America Bohemian, by a misuse of that term; that is to say, it is essentially anti-bourgeois in spirit and has freed itself from the

restrictions of bourgeois morality and convention. In this section the democratic spirit is very strong. But the *grand bourgeois*, the *petit rentier*—the man who has scraped together enough to live frugally on rent or interest—and a large section of the middle bourgeoisie are intensely anti-democratic. It is a curious fact, which a French writer has remarked, that there is still in France a prejudice against trade and commerce—a prejudice which in its origin is not altogether unreasonable. The ambition of every French tradesman is to save enough money to become a *rentier* and live without working.[1]

The democratic spirit of the peasantry and the proletariat makes relations with them easy and pleasant for a bourgeois. There is not in France the constraint between persons of different classes which makes their relations often difficult in England. French domestic servants, for instance, are on more friendly terms with their employers than is the case in England; they are polite without being servile and familiar without taking liberties. A Parisian workman can be quite at his ease in a bourgeois drawing-room simply because he does not regard a bourgeois as his better, but treats him with the courtesy due to an equal. French manners have a levelling tendency. The mere fact that one addresses everybody as Monsieur, Madame, or Mademoiselle, as the case may be, tends to a sense of equality, just as the fact that in England people say Sir or Ma'am only to their supposed superiors has the opposite effect. Manners and social usages have more importance than many people imagine; there is at present a deplorable tendency in England to neglect them altogether and to cultivate rudeness. The French may be too

1 See page 188.

ceremonious, from our point of view, but it is better to exaggerate in that direction than in the other. It is not at all an indifferent matter that in France, when one goes into a small shop, one raises one's hat to the lady behind the counter and says "Good morning" to her; the custom has an immense social significance. Education, too, is both better and cheaper in France than in England. The best schools in France cost only about £16 a year, with the result that people can send their sons and daughters to a Lycée who in England could not possibly afford a similar education. The public schools in France are really public and are not, like the English institutions miscalled by that name, nurseries of snobbery. The French Universities are equally inexpensive and democratic, and are available for any boys and girls whose parents can afford to keep them without earning their living up to the age of twenty or thereabouts. The consequence is that it is much more easy in France than in England for the son of a workman or a peasant to rise to eminence in a learned profession or in politics. Many of the leading French politicians have risen from the ranks; for instance, M. Painlevé is the son of a Parisian artisan and M. Briand of a country publican. M. Painlevé has not only been Prime Minister of France, but is also one of the most eminent mathematicians in Europe, is a member of the Institute, and has been a professor at the Sorbonne and the Ecole Polytechnique.

Nevertheless, the feeling on the part of the proletariat that they are not in any way inferior to the bourgeois dces not tend to bring the two classes together. It has the opposite effect. For the workman knows that economically he is not the equal of the bourgeois, and his passion for equality

makes him the more determined to break down the economic barrier that separates the two classes. It is no longer the ambition of the French proletariat to become bourgeois; they have an intense class consciousness, and their feeling against the bourgeoisie is often very bitter. The bitterness is intensified by resentment at the way in which too many, though not all, of those that have come out of the proletariat and improved their social position have become completely bourgeois in feeling, even sometimes the worst enemies of the class from which they sprang.

In the country districts the sense of equality has as marked an influence as in the towns. The contrast between a French country village, except in certain backward districts, and an English one is very striking. In England a whole village is often the property of one man, who necessarily becomes the lord and master of its inhabitants; nobody can even live in it without his permission, and independent thought or action becomes an impossibility. In France the peasants own their land and are independent of everybody. The system of peasant proprietorship has grave drawbacks, as we shall see later, and I doubt whether it can last,[1] but it has the advantage over the English system of producing an independent peasantry. The château and the curé are as closely allied in France as are the squire and the parson in England, but whereas the latter are a formidable power and sometimes an oppressive tyranny, the château and the curé in France are now almost without influence, except in the reactionary regions of the West. In Brittany, the Vendée, and in certain parts of Normandy the château and the curé are still a power, because the Church holds the people. But

[1] See page 220.

farmer as distinct from the wine-grower is often brutalised by stupid and monotonous toil. But the remedy is to change the system. With modern methods and a full use of agricultural machinery France might produce more than she does at present with half the labour. The one great advantage that France has in her present economic and financial crisis is the fact that her most important industry—agriculture—can be at once resumed and does not need years to recover itself. The land is still there, and although much of it has gone out of cultivation during the war or been only imperfectly cultivated, a couple of years would set everything right. Here is the point on which attention should first have been concentrated rather than on schemes for appropriating the coal of the Saar Valley.

This does not mean that France is to have no industry at all; but the policy of artificially fostering industries by Protection should be discontinued. If and when the nations of the world have the sense to adopt universal Free Trade, every country will have those industries, and only those, which are natural to it. Meanwhile. the French people would do well to consider whether they would not be wise to adopt Free Trade without waiting for every other country to do so. The experience of France has proved the folly of the notion that Protection can be limited to raw material or limited in any way whatever. There is no practical alternative between Free Trade and all-round Protection. The Protectionist reaction began in France more than thirty years ago with the pretext of limiting protective duties to certain commodities. But high Protection raised prices and the unprotected trades, which had to pay more for everything they bought, soon insisted on being protected in their turn. No definition of raw

price of their raw materials. Protection has ruined the French mercantile marine. Commodities such as coal, of which France does not produce nearly enough for her own use, are protected nevertheless. The result is a Coal Trust which even in peace time kept the price of coal in Paris at about three times what it was in London; the duty and the cost of transport accounted perhaps for about twenty per cent. of the difference. For one of the charms of Protection is that it almost invariably raises prices by a great deal more than the actual amount of the duty. Some of the vagaries of Protection are grotesque; for instance, there is an import duty on bananas, although they are not grown in France, in order to keep up their price in the supposed interest of French growers of apples and pears. French butter is cheaper in England than in France, and I have gone from Paris to London to find French grapes being sold there at a lower price than in Paris. On the other hand, certain industries have been artifically promoted by Protection, with results not always purely economic. The metallurgical industries, in particular, have been developed far beyond the needs of the country and have become immensely powerful. Their influence in politics and on the Press is most pernicious; while they have worked hand in hand with the same industries in other countries, including Germany, as frequent revelations have shown, they have spent enormous sums in promoting Chauvinist feeling in order to obtain orders for armaments. They were the chief promoters of the agitation for the annexation of the Saar Valley, and there is good reason for believing that they prevented the bombardment of the mines of Briey when the latter were held by the Germans.

In the French colonies Protectionism has done

free to close it at the end of that time. Moreover, confidence in that agreement was necessarily destroyed by the existence of the secret clauses which contradicted some of the most important provisions of the public treaty. I have always been convinced that the discovery of the existence of the secret clauses—probably from a Russian source, for they had been communicated to Russia as the Ally of France—was the cause of the German Emperor's sensational visit to Tangiers in 1905. It would not have been unreasonable to conclude that, since England and France had deceived the world on the question of the integrity and independence of Morocco, no reliance could be placed on their guarantee of the open door for thirty years. The Moroccan dispute brought France and Germany to the verge of war in 1905 and again in 1911; without any doubt it was one of the ultimate causes of the recent war, which was, on the part of Germany, partly a "preventive war," partly a war for colonial expansion. Protectionism will always lead to war and universal Free Trade is one of the essential conditions of permanent peace. One of the most necessary factors in French reconstruction is, then, a thorough reform of the whole colonial system, which is far more important to France than any extension of territory. Indeed, France of all countries least needs more territory; her colonial empire is already larger than she can conveniently manage and its resources are far from being fully developed; she has no surplus population for colonising purposes and Frenchmen will not go to the colonies unless they happen to be officials. Even in Tunis there are many more Italians than Frenchmen, although the Mediterranean Basin is particularly suitable for French colonisation. Indeed France would have done well

carried to its logical conclusion. The profiteers are no longer content with heavy import duties; they insist on the prohibition of imports. They are no longer content to keep up prices by limiting production; they demand and obtain from the Government the bolstering up of prices by legal decree. Early in 1919, because the French paper manufacturers, who are in fact a powerful Trust, had large stocks of paper in hand and the price of paper was beginning to fall, M. Loucheur, the Minister of Reconstruction, fixed by decree minimum prices of paper above its market value. Such was M. Loucheur's notion of reconstruction—and this is not surprising, since M. Loucheur himself is interested in a large number of industrial concerns and has made a huge fortune during the war. It was the great war magnates of industry who manœuvred him into the Ministry of Reconstruction. It was an easy matter, since, as I have already said, M. Clemenceau knows nothing of economic questions and takes no interest in them; no doubt he quite innocently imagined that the best Minister of Reconstruction would be a successful business man. Once in the Ministry of Reconstruction, M. Loucheur adopted the policy that suited his friends, and explained to the country that the prohibition of imports was necessary to keep up the rate of exchange.[1] All importation was

[1] The great French war magnates of industry "have succeeded in putting one of their number, the most active and the most intelligent, at the head of the Ministry charged with controlling them To him, Minister and man of business, representing at the same time both the nation and those who supply it, falls the task of showing that the interests of his two employers are identical. He has done it with remarkable cleverness by evoking the spectre of the exchange. 'Take care,' he says, 'if you buy English cloth or American machines, you are going to depreciate our currency.' The French public, including the members of Parliament, are not familiar with the machinery of international

forbidden without the express permission of the Ministry of Reconstruction, except in the case of raw material in the most restricted sense of the term—"matières brutes" as distinct from "matières premières" in general. The Roubaix spinners were prevented by the Government from importing machinery that they had bought in America, Ford motor-cars bought by the State were left to rust in the port of Bordeaux, although there were no motor-cars to be had in France, and, whereas the clothing trades estimated the minimum quantity of imported cloth and dress material that they would require for the second quarter of 1919 at 9,000 tons, they were allowed to import during that period less than 1,000 tons.[1]

The "spectre of the exchange," to use M. Delaisi's phrase, for a time obtained general acquiescence in this "economic Malthusianism," as M. Gustave Téry, editor of *L'Œuvre,* has happily called it, but as the exchange fell against France in spite of the prohibition of imports, and as several industries besides the clothing trades suffered severely from the prohibition, public opinion began to change. An energetic and most useful campaign against M. Loucheur's policy was carried on in *L'Œuvre,* which frankly advocated Free Trade, and—what was most significant of all—the General Confederation of Labour in a manifesto issued on

payments. But they are very much alive to the idea that the bank-note of a hundred francs which they have in their pocket may become worth only eighty. They have seen in imports the spectre of bankruptcy; and deputies, Press, public, everybody has approved the policy of M Loucheur" (M. Francis Delaisi, *Manchester Guardian*, May 15, 1919)

[1] Perhaps the most astonishing example of this policy was the refusal of the French Government either to buy itself or allow anybody else to buy any of the unused material and supplies of the American Army. The refusal provoked such strong protests that the Government was ultimately obliged to yield to public opinion and purchase the whole stock.

June 11, 1919, denounced "the closing of the frontiers" and prohibitive tariffs as being among the principle causes of the high cost of living and declared that they would bring France to ruin and violence. The manifesto asked whether the Government was in the hands of private interests or whether it had no conception of the general interest.

I fear that there can be no doubt that the Government—or rather M. Loucheur—was influenced by regard for private rather than public interests. The story of this conspiracy to sacrifice the interests of the French people to those of a few capitalists is so disgraceful that I prefer to leave a Frenchman to tell it and will simply quote the account of it given with consummate irony by M. Delaisi in his article in the *Manchester Guardian* already referred to. As I have said, during the war factories were established in the uninvaded territory to supply the Government with war material; in many cases they were established by manufacturers that had escaped from the invaded districts, to whom the Government lent capital without interest when they required it. All these factories were working at high pressure when the Armistice came. It was hurriedly decided, M. Delaisi said, to adapt the workshops to peace uses, but this would take time. Meanwhile. American and English missions hurried to France and "offered us," said M. Delaisi, "whatever we needed and at a low price." But this would not suit the French manufacturers, who would have "to produce less, to sell cheaper, to forego fat dividends and big salaries—those compensations for dear living." Moreover, "the greater part of the new industries had been established in unfavourable conditions. Far from the sources of their raw materials, or from their markets, the net

costs would be burdened with heavy transport charges. That did not matter so long as they were working for the State, which always paid very well. But if one opened the market to foreign competition it was clear that many of our factories placed in exceptional and artificial positions would not be able to survive. Certainly their owners would not be ruined by that, for the greater number of them had had all their capital repaid in interest in four years; but one does not easily resign oneself to closing down a business when it is doing well, which has cost so much trouble and yielded such good profits." So the chief manufacturers agreed on the policy of closing the French market to all manufactured goods and restricting the importations "to absolutely indispensable materials—coal, steel, sheet-iron, wool and cotton," and this was the policy adopted by their representative at the Ministry of Reconstruction. It will take hardly more than a year or two, when the factories have been converted, to restore industry in uninvaded France, and, meanwhile the invaded districts must wait. Instead of reconstructing the invaded territory as quickly as possible and enabling its industry to be revived, the policy was adopted of exploiting the invaded territory for the benefit of factories working in artificial conditions and, therefore, at a disadvantage in regard to the foreign market.

"Happily we have at hand"—I quote M. Delaisi —"inside our own frontiers a new land, a country known to be exceedingly rich. The soil is fertile, coal and iron abundant. There all is destroyed; everything has to be remade—mine shafts, props, blast furnaces, steel factories, weaving mills, buildings, towns, farms, agricultural implements. Work costing sixty milliards is waiting to be done

there, according to the official report. What more extensive markets could you dream of? What is Morocco, what is Indo-China compared with these ten departments waiting to be rebuilt? But it is essential that Allied products should not penetrate them, for in a year or so reconstruction would come to an end and by the time our factories were ready the market would have disappeared. Let us close them, then, to the foreign importer as we have closed Algeria or Madagascar. We have no diplomatic difficulties to fear; the devastated regions, happily, are in France. Already a Reconstruction Office controls all buying from outside, and it has forbidden anybody to import the least thing without its permission. At this rate the reconstruction process will doubtless be a little slow. M. Loucheur stated in Parliament that it would not begin seriously for two years. It will take at least two years more to re-establish our steel works, five or six to set certain mines going, and, according to an official report, all the houses cannot be rebuilt for sixteen years. It seems that our devastated regions will have to wait until the factories behind them are ready to work for them. They will have to regulate their needs to suit the convenience of those who will supply them. It would be wrong to exhaust too quickly a market like this. It is necessary to avoid jolts, to stabilise production so as to prevent crises, to make sure of big dividends, and to prepare for gradual liquidation. As to the refugees, there is no need to trouble about them. The majority of the great manufacturers of the north and east have set up their factories behind the war zone. They are more concerned about the prosperity of those who are doing well than of those who are ruined. As to the workmen, in the past four years many of them have become accustomed

to working in new districts. As to the peasants, so attached to the place of their birth, so eager to restore their ruined farms, the providential indifference of the Government officials has already succeeded in discouraging them. The greater part of those who went back in the first days have been maddened by the delays and are returning. Thus the new industries born of the war, well protected against foreign competition, assured of an important market on the spot, can develop at their ease and look to the future with confidence."[1]

The cynical indifference of the capitalist classes to the general welfare of the community could hardly be better illustrated than by this plot to exploit the miseries and sufferings caused by the invasion for the benefit of a few profiteers. Nor could there be a better example of the working of Protection, for the plot is only a logical application of Protectionist principles, which mean the sacrifice of the many to the few. Since M. Delaisi's article was written the prohibition of imports has been cancelled in regard to a considerable number of products, but the relief is little more than nominal, for import duties have been increased all round, in some cases as much as 200 per cent., in order to protect the profiteers. Many imports are subject, in addition, to the *ad valorem* luxury tax of 10 per cent.[2]

The domination of the great industrial magnates,

[1] *Manchester Guardian*, May 15, 1919

[2] The neglect by the Government of the devastated region has caused such profound discontent among the inhabitants that they have taken the matter into their own hands and formed a "States-General" with local branches everywhere. There is a strong feeling among them in favour of decentralisation and they have declared war on the bureaucracy. Ten months after the Armistice nothing had been done even to begin the restoration of the invaded districts and many places were still without drinking water.

of which these restrictions are the result, is a grave evil, and France must be freed from it if she is to recover herself. She must also be freed from the domination of the financiers. In all countries the influence of High Finance is very great—it is the inevitable result of the modern capitalist system and, so long as that system continues, it will go on increasing—but in no country are the financiers so powerful as in France. The great banks and the financial interests control the Government, Parliament, and the Press to a very great extent, and their power is all the more dangerous since it works in secret and is not visible to the public. The public does not and cannot know, for instance, that behind this or that Press campaign, which seems to be actuated by patriotic motives, are the influence and the funds of some great financiers in whose interest the campaign has really been started; that the opposition in Parliament to this or that reform is really instigated by the financial interests working in the lobbies and using every form of pressure on senators and deputies. I confess that I see no remedy for this state of things except that of a complete change in the social and economic system. Anti-semitism is not a remedy, for the great financiers are by no means all Jews; some of them are excellent Catholics. Indeed anti-semitism plays the game of the financiers and the capitalists by diverting attention from the real causes of the evil. If the French or any other people could be convinced that what really mattered was not the system which makes financiers possible, but the shape of the financiers' noses, that would be an excellent thing for those financiers whose noses happened to be straight. The anti-semitic movement in France in the last decade of the nineteenth century strengthened the financial interests and

also turned out ultimately to the advantage of the Jews. When the public discovered the baselessness of the charges made against the Jews, it jumped to the conclusion that the financiers were less mischievous than had been supposed, and it came to be thought reactionary to say anything against a Jew even when he deserved it. At the bottom of much anti-semitism is the notion that it is the cosmopolitanism of High Finance that is the danger, as if the war had not shown that it is Nationalism that is the enemy of humanity. In fact, the only advantage of High Finance is that, being cosmopolitan, it is always an influence for peace. It helped to prevent war in 1911 and the fact that it failed to stop it in 1914 only proves that even cosmopolitan Finance is as powerless as the Christian religion to stem the tide of national hatreds and patriotic rabies.

The chief reasons for the exceptional power and influence of the financiers in France are probably the centralised administration and the commercial timidity which leads the great majority of French investors to refuse their money to industrial enterprises and prefer safe securities such as Government loans. This has made France the money-lending country of the world, and in a money-lending country the money-lender is naturally top dog.

CHAPTER III

THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS

"The Penguin State was democratic. Three or four financial companies exercised in it a power more extensive and above all more effective and constant than that of the Ministers of the Republic, petty potentates whom the companies secretly managed, whom they obliged by intimidation or corruption to favour them at the expense of the State and whom they destroyed by calumnies in the Press when they remained honest."—ANATOLE FRANCE

No people are more ready than the French to admit that their political institutions are defective; indeed they are inclined to exaggerate their defects. Most Frenchmen will tell you that politicians are without exception a set of unprincipled and self-seeking intriguers actuated by nothing but a desire to improve their own position financially or otherwise, that Parliament does nothing but talk, that one Government is as bad as another, and that the Administration is corrupt from top to bottom and hopelessly incompetent. It is a curious paradox that, whereas Frenchmen are often inclined to look upon the State as a sort of universal providence and to appeal to it on every possible occasion, they nevertheless have the lowest possible opinion of it and take for granted that it will mismanage anything that it touches. Naturally the French are

individualists; by tradition and training they are often "Etatistes."[1]

Some Frenchmen attribute the defects that they find in their political institutions to democracy. There has been, partly on that account, a considerable reaction during recent years in the bourgeoisie against democratic institutions and the republican form of government. The reaction has been particularly marked among the intellectuals, many of whom have passed from democratic and even revolutionary opinions to the advocacy of "strong government" and increased authority, and even of Royalism pure and simple. And Royalism in France in its only active form means the restoration of absolute Monarchy. The Constitutional Monarchists—the old traditional Orleanists—have nearly all rallied quite sincerely to the Republic and are sometimes stronger defenders of popular liberties and constitutional guarantees than many so-called Radicals. For, as the late M. Paul Thureau-Dangin explained to me some years ago, he and his friends, although they preferred a constitutional Monarchy to a Republic, came to the conclusion that the former was impossible in France and therefore rallied to the Republic, since nothing would induce them to accept an absolute Monarchy.

[1] For this word, as for "étatisme," there is no exact English equivalent, for "State Socialism" is not an accurate translation "Etatisme" need not necessarily be socialist in any sense of the term "Statism" would be a literal translation, but it is an ugly word, and it would be impossible to translate "étatiste" by "statist," which has already another meaning. The nearest English equivalent of "étatisme" is "State Capitalism," but again it is impossible to use the term "State Capitalist" for "étatiste" On the whole it seems best to use the French words · after all the purist objection to the adoption of any foreign term is rather pedantic We have in the past adopted many foreign words, which have now become part of the language.

The fate of Louis-Philippe shows, in fact, that a constitutional Monarchy has no chance of success in France; the Monarchy of July was in many respects the best regime that France had during the nineteenth century—it was certainly the most pacific—but it did not last. The logical French mind regarded a constitutional Monarchy as an absurdity; Louis-Philippe was ridiculed as a bourgeois king perpetually armed with an umbrella. And indeed, whatever may be said for the British system, which has grown up gradually, it is an absurdity to set up a constitutional Monarchy deliberately, since there is no advantage in making the presidency of a Republic hereditary. The only active Royalist party in France is now represented by the organisation known as the Action Française, of which M. Charles Maurras and M. Léon Daudet are the leaders. Its organ in the Press, which has the same title, is notorious for the scurrility of its attacks on Republicans and its incitations to the assassination of prominent French public men, which had so deplorable a result in the case of Jaurès, but which have, nevertheless, been allowed to continue with astonishing impunity by successive Governments during the war. The Action Française advocates the suppression of Parliament, the abolition of democracy, and the establishment of an absolute Monarchy; it attacks the old Royalists that will not accept its programme with even greater virulence than Republicans. It is the centre of the anti-democratic reaction and derives whatever force it may possess from the general dissatisfaction with the present regime.

It is not, however, true that whatever defects there may be in the present French political institutions—and, as I have said, those defects are often exaggerated by Frenchmen themselves—are

due to democracy. It cannot be true, since French political institutions are not democratic. France has a Royalist Constitution and a Bonapartist Administration. "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose," is a French proverb and France is the country of which it is true. Herein is to be found one of the greatest differences between France and England: in England we preserve the form and change the substance—we cling to old forms such as the Monarchy when they are emptied of meaning and have ceased to have any practical use; in France they make apparently complete changes in the form and preserve the substance. To a superficial observer it would appear that drastic changes were made in France in 1870, but, in fact, the changes were mainly external; in reality very little was changed. The present French system of administration is in all essentials and in spirit the system founded by Napoleon I, highly centralised in order to concentrate all real power in the hands of the National Executive and thoroughly anti-democratic. And in all countries the administration is more important than the legislature, for the legislature makes laws, but the administration applies them—or refrains from doing so. Moreover, the administration comes into direct contact with the daily life of the pecple, whose happiness depends on its character and methods more than on the letter of the law. A country might get on very well without a Parliament as we understand it, and would probably get on better without a Government, but it could not exist without administration. Government and administration are two different things, as Saint-Simon recognised when he proposed that the administration of things should be substituted for the government of men—the State as an organ of administration for the State as

an organ of authority. M. Emile Vandervelde has given a lucid exposition of the distinction between these two functions of the State in his admirable little book "Le Socialisme contre l'Etat."[1] The undemocratic or rather anti-democratic character of the French administration is therefore even more important and more pernicious in its results than the undemocratic elements in the French Constitution. It is particularly because the English administrative system is more democratic than the French that England, although not yet a democracy, is politically the more democratic country of the two, although it preserves monarchical and aristocratic forms which have lost their substance, and although its people are less democratic in spirit than the French.

In the case of the administration there was not even a nominal change in France after the fall of the Second Empire; the constitutional laws by which the Third Republic functions left the administration untouched. And the system that they left untouched was the administrative system of Napoleon I, which had survived without any important modification all the successive regimes of the nineteenth century—the Restoration, the Monarchy of July, the Second Republic, and the Second Empire. The dead hand of Napoleon is still laid on France. That the system of Napoleon was admirably adapted to the purposes for which he designed it cannot be questioned; Napoleon was one of the greatest geniuses that the world has ever seen and he usually hit on the best means of obtaining his ends. If the ideal be the concentration of all power in the hands of an individual or a central bureaucracy, then the French system of administra-

[1] Page 52. Paris, Berger-Levrault English translation published by Kerr, Chicago, U S.A.

tion is an ideal one; but it is totally unsuited to a Republic or even to a constitutional Monarchy professing to be based on democracy. Local government is really mainly in the hands of the Prefects, who represent the Government in each department and whose powers are still enormous, although the Third Republic has somewhat extended the power of the local elected authorities. Each commune in France has a municipal council elected by manhood suffrage, but it can do very little without the consent of the central administration, whose approval is required for such purely local matters as the making of a new street or even a change in the name of an old one. It is to be regretted that in the latter case the consent of the central authority is given much too easily, with the result that all over France streets whose names were part of the history of the country have been rebaptised. One need not be a clerical to regret the suppression in many French towns of all street names that are those of saints, nor need one be a bad Republican to regret the too frequent attempts to obliterate everything that recalls a former regime. Troyes is one of the towns where this lack of historical sense has expressed itself with the most ruthless universality, sometimes it would seem out of sheer perversity. Anti-clerical feeling is no doubt responsible for the conversion of the rue Notre-Dame into the rue Emile-Zola, but what could have induced a municipal council to suppress so delicious a title as "rue des Trois-Pucelles," with its mediæval flavour, in favour of the name of an obscure general? This vandalism is a striking example of the iconoclasm of the French, and perhaps also of their excessive susceptibility to the influence of words and phrases. The founders of each new regime have thought to

consolidate it by obliterating all traces of its predecessor. Alas! France had no less than nine regimes—if the Directorate and the Consulate be considered separate ones—in the course of the nineteenth century, and I do not think that the survival of the Third Republic is due to the fact that there is no longer a Place Royale in Paris.

In other matters, however, the central authority is much less complacent, and many deficiencies in local administration are due, at least in part, to the paralysing control of the Government. Since 1884 the municipal councils have been allowed to elect their own mayors, who up to that time were appointed by the Government, but the Government still has the power to depose the mayor, and even to dismiss the whole council at its will and pleasure.[1] The unofficial authority exercised by the Prefect and his subordinates, the sub-prefects, is even more pernicious than their official powers; their position as the channels of favours and disfavours, of rewards and punishments, enables them to exert pressure and gives them enormous influence, to which the only counterpoise is the equally pernicious influence of Senators and Deputies. France will never be a democratic country until the Prefects and sub-prefects are abolished and much larger powers are given to the

[1] The Prefect has the power to suspend a mayor for not more than a month; the period of suspension may be increased to three months by the Minister of the Interior. A mayor can be deposed only by a Presidential Decree on the advice of the Government In either case the mayor concerned can appeal to the *Conseil d'Etat*, but, as the law does not specify the reasons for which a mayor may be suspended or deposed, an appeal can be successful only on technical grounds of procedure. The Prefect can also suspend a whole municipal council for not more than a month, but must at once report the suspension to the Minister of the Interior. The dissolution of a municipal council requires a Presidential Decree. There is no appeal except on purely technical grounds.

local authorities. The *conseils-généraux* and *conseils d'arrondissement*, which answer to the county councils and district councils in England, have even less power than the municipalities.[1] The Prefect is present at the meetings of the *conseil-général* of his department and objects whenever it attempts to go beyond the narrow limits assigned to it. The municipal council of Paris is even more in leading strings than those of other great towns; the Prefect of the Seine and the Prefect of Police have the right to attend its meetings.

French education is as highly centralised as everything else. Napoleon deprived the universities of their independence and autonomy, and the University is now a vast national organisation under the control of the Ministry of Public Instruction, which comprises all the public educational institutions in France from the elementary school up to the university in the English sense of the term. There is no variety in the schools; the ideal is that in every school of the same class throughout the country the pupils should be doing exactly the same thing at exactly the same hour. There are no local education authorities,[2] and all the educational

[1] The *conseil-général* of a department (answering to a county council) is composed of one representative of each canton in the department, no matter what the population of the canton may be It may meet only twice a year, in the Spring and in August; the duration of the Spring session must not exceed a fortnight, and that of the August session a month The Government may convene a *conseil-général* when it chooses, and the Prefect must convene it on the written demand of two-thirds of its members: an extraordinary session thus convened must not last longer than a week The powers of the *conseil-général* are very limited and principally concern the finances of the department

[2] There is a "Council of Primary Instruction" in each department consisting of the Prefect, the chief School Inspector ("Inspecteur d'académie"), four delegates from the *conseil-général*, four elementary school teachers (two men and two

staff from the elementary-school teacher to the university professor are appointed or revoked, promoted or degraded, by the Government, which moves them from one place to another at will. This means in practice that the career of an elementary-school teacher, at any rate, depends on enjoying the favour of the Prefect and of the local Senators and Deputies. The one power in regard to education that is left to a local authority is the very one that ought not to be—the enforcement of the law in regard to compulsory attendance at school. The authority whose duty it is to enforce it is the mayor, with the result that it is not enforced in the rural districts because the mayor dares not prosecute his constituents. In the greater part of rural France all, or nearly all, the children go to school because their parents are enlightened enough to understand the value of education; in Champagne, for example, nearly all the parents sent their children to school before education was made compulsory. But in the reactionary districts the children are sent to work in the fields at the age of eight—although child-labour is illegal—and go to school intermittently, or in some cases not at all. In general, school attendance is regular in anti-clerical districts and irregular in districts where the Church is strong. Many of the country clergy denounce the schools from the pulpit and provide the peasants with a religious disguise for the avarice and selfishness which make

women) elected by their colleagues, and two school inspectors nominated by the Minister of Public Instruction. But this council, which meets as a rule only four times a year, has only powers of supervision and recommendation Its chief duty is to see that the regulations are observed in the schools; it has no real share in their management and no voice in the appointment of teachers. The Council of Primary Instruction appoints one or more delegates to look after the schools in each canton of the department and report to it as to their conduct.

them deprive their children of education in order to exploit their labour. For years people interested in education in France have been demanding that the enforcement of the compulsory education law should be taken out of the hands of the mayors and entrusted to inspectors independent of electoral considerations, but nothing has been done, although the proportion of illiterates in France is disgracefully high.[1]

To sum up, the French administration is a centralised bureaucracy which spreads its tentacles over the whole country and controls the life of the people through its agents, discouraging individual initiative and enforcing an arid uniformity without regard for regional differences. It has many arbitrary powers and closely resembles Russian administration under the Tsars. It is hierarchical in its organisation, each member of it having an exactly defined position in regard to his superiors and his subordinates. Its methods are unintelligent and often vexatious, and it is swathed in red tape. The officials regard themselves, not as the servants, but as the masters of the public, and act accordingly. Nobody can go into a Parisian post-office without being made to feel that, and the post-office officials are modest and obliging in comparison with the officials of a Government department. Here are a few examples of what the French themselves so appropriately call the "chinoiserie" of the administration. A few years ago I wrote to the Prefecture of the Seine claiming a small reduction in taxes to which I was entitled owing to the fact that I had children under sixteen. Months went by without any acknowledgment of the letter, and I had

[1] According to a statement made at the national congress of the General Confederation of Labour at Lyons on September 16, 1919, adult illiterates are 5 per cent. of the population.

forgotten all about the matter when, more than a year after my application, I at last received a reply informing me that my application ought to have been made on stamped paper and that I could appeal to the Conseil d'Etat.[1] On another occasion I telegraphed a certain sum of money from London to a member of my family in Paris, who duly presented the telegraphic money order at the post office indicated therein. As she could not produce papers of identification satisfactory to the gentleman with whom she dealt, he told her that she must bring two witnesses to prove her identity. She returned to the post office, bringing with her the concierge of the house in which we lived and a friend who occupied another flat in the same house. Their papers, too, were considered insufficient and they were told that each of them must bring two more witnesses. At that point the holder of the money order gave up the enterprise in despair and borrowed the money from a friend of mine. If she had known it, she had only, when the telegram was delivered, to write on it a request for payment "à domicile" and return it to the messenger, and the money would have been brought to her from the post office. The post office official with whom she had to do was, of course, well aware of that fact and deliberately abstained from giving her the information. What else would one expect? He was there to "embêter le public." One more example will suffice. A person desiring to change a number of sheets of stamped paper for sheets of a different individual

[1] The *Conseil d'Etat* is a supreme Court with both executive and judicial functions. It is the final Court of Appeal for all cases coming within the scope of the *droit administratif*. It has not the power of the American Supreme Court to decide whether a law is constitutional. The French Parliament is supreme: laws passed by it cannot be revised, and there is no means of bringing it to book if it acts unconstitutionally.

value presented himself at the central office for the sale of stamped paper. There he was told that if the sheets had been soiled so as to be unusable they could have been exchanged, but as they were perfectly clean it was impossible to take them back. He promptly soiled them with his boots and the exchange was effected. I mentioned this pleasing incident to a high official of the French administration, who admitted that the regulation in question seemed hardly reasonable or profitable to the State, but said that there might be some reason for it hidden from ordinary intelligences, and that in any case the duty of the official was to follow the regulation blindly. I ventured tentatively to suggest that in a Government department, as in a private business concern, some room might be left for the exercise of individual discretion. He was horrified at the idea. If, he said, any sort of individual initiative or discretion were left to Government officials, the whole fabric of the State would crumble to pieces. I remained unconvinced.

These are but typical examples of the methods of an administration which seems to have been modelled on that of ancient China, and which is founded on the principle that the individual was made for the State and not the State for the individual. At the head of this great bureaucratic machine are the Ministers, all-powerful dispensers of places, decorations, tobacco agencies and other favours, which they shower on a grateful country through the intermediary of Senators, Deputies and Prefects. And behind the Ministers are the real rulers of France—those who pull the strings—the Bank of France, the Crédit Foncier, the railway companies, the great financial and industrial interests. Anatole France once asked a Minister why all French Governments were equally impotent in

the matter of social reform. "What do you expect us to do?" was the reply; "the Minister of Finance is at the Crédit Lyonnais, the Minister of Marine at Creusot, the Minister of War on the Commissions, and so on." The reply may not have been literally true, but it was at least a symbolical representation of the truth; it is this highly centralised undemocratic system of administration that enables a handful of capitalists and financiers to keep so firm a grip on France. The more centralised the power is in any country, the fewer the hands in which it is concentrated, the easier it is to capture it. The excessive powers of the Central Executive in France make its capture by hidden influences easier than in many other countries. The evil has been aggravated by the abuse of the doctrine of the separation of the legislative and executive powers, which is interpreted as meaning that the legislature, although it has the right to dismiss a Government of whose policy it disapproves, has no right to interfere in the details of administration, with the result that the Executive is subject to no effective control and becomes almost omnipotent. In France the *raison d'état* is supreme; the individual has hardly any rights against the State.

One has only to look back at the history of France in the nineteenth century to see that the centralised administration has been the most powerful instrument of conservatism and reaction, the greatest obstacle to the triumph of democracy. It was the centralised administrative system that enabled the Royalists under Louis XVIII and Charles X to establish the White Terror, to restore the *ancien régime*, and to keep France under their heel for fifteen years, until the only remedy for oppression was insurrection. When at last the Parisian democracy revolted in 1830, the bour-

geoisie, thanks to the defection of Lafayette, prevented the creation of a Republic, which would almost certainly have proved a stable and lasting form of government; and it was the centralised administration that enabled the bourgeoisie to retain the mastery of the country during the eighteen years of the Monarchy of July. It was again the centralised administration that made it possible for Napoleon III to be Dictator of France for twenty-two years with the aid of the Church; "to secure himself against the claims of liberty," said the Catholic Montalembert, "he needed the support of both the guard-room and the sacristy." And it has been the centralised administration that has preserved the domination of the bourgeoisie—of the financial and industrial magnates—under the Third Republic, and has neutralised the democratic elements in the French Constitution. A dictator or a bureaucracy armed with such an instrument as the French administrative system can secure the absolute mastery of the country and reduce opposition to impotence unless and until it becomes revolt. That is why France had three revolutions in the nineteenth century and is likely to have a fourth in the twentieth. "France," said the Constitutional Monarchist Royer-Collard nearly a century ago, "is a bureau-governed nation in the hands of irresponsible officials directed by the hand of a central power whose instruments they are. . . . Centralisation has made us a nation of slaves to an irresponsible bureaucracy which is itself centralised in the hands of the Government of which it is the instrument." That is as true in 1919 as it was in 1823.

No department of the French administration is so anti-democratic as the Secret Police, which is under the control of the Ministry of the Interior;

its methods resemble those of the Russian Secret Police under the Tsardom, and it exists more for political purposes than for the prevention and detection of crime. If the proportion of undetected crimes in France is abnormally high, it is because the detective service is so much occupied in tracking the political opponents of the Government of the day that it has little leisure for tracking criminals. Its spies are everywhere: every political and labour organisation is full of them, especially such as have or are supposed to have a revolutionary tendency. The imagination reels at the thought of the vast quantities of paper and ink that must be wasted on reports of the meetings of a Socialist section or a Trade Union branch. The unfortunate officials that have to read such reports are much to be pitied, for, as may be imagined, the information given in them is usually far from accurate. The police spy invariably betrays both his employers and the organisation on which he spies, and as his pay depends on the information that he supplies, when interesting information is lacking he has to invent it. The system produces an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion, and leads to constant accusations of spying by members of political and labour organisations against one another. It also leads to grave abuses and injustices: a police agent can always either denounce as a spy to his comrades an individual against whom he has a personal grudge, or else send false reports about his words or actions to the police authorities; he rarely fails to use the opportunity. What is worst of all is that the spy easily becames an *agent provocateur*, for the French Political Police unhappily resorts to the detestable method of manufacturing crime in order to have the credit of repressing it. One of the worst examples of this system was the

famous case of Métivier, at the time of the great strikes in 1908 which culminated in the massacres of the strikers by the military at Villeneuve-St. Georges and Draveil. Métivier, who was a Trade Union secretary, was one of the chief instigators of the strikers to acts of violence. He was arrested, and there was an interpellation on his arrest in the Chamber of Deputies. M. Clemenceau, who was at the time Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, in his reply to the interpellators, justified the arrest on the ground that Métivier had been the chief author of the troubles, denounced him in vigorous language and indignantly denied that the arrest of such a man could be regarded as an affront to the working classes. Two years later it was discovered that Métivier was an *agent provocateur* employed by the police at a regular salary with the knowledge and approval of M. Clemenceau himself, and that he had been paid double salary while serving the terms of imprisonment necessary to prevent any suspicion on the part of the workmen of his real character. The whole of the facts were published in the Press and M. Clemenceau could not deny them. This is, unfortunately, merely a typical example of an habitual practice which had gone on long before that time and which still continues. It was remarkable only from the fact that for once it was possible to prove the direct responsibility of the Minister of the Interior. But the Minister of the Interior is always either directly or indirectly responsible, for he could stop the employment of *agents provocateurs* by a stroke of the pen. Not one Minister of the Interior in the history of the Third Republic has done so.

An exhaustive account of the methods and practices of the Political Police would fill a whole volume, and only a few more examples of them can

be mentioned. Everybody of any importance, particularly of any political importance, has his *dossier* at the Ministry of the Interior, in which anything supposed to be to his discredit is noted. The *dossiers* are compiled from any sort of gossip or tittle-tattle that can be collected from anybody, and no attempt is made to verify the information or to test the credibility of the informants, who are for the most part police spies—the most untrustworthy of all witnesses. In Paris some of the information is obtained from the concierges, many of whom are in touch with the police and are employed to spy on the tenants of the houses where they are employed, and even sometimes to intercept their correspondence. Rightly or wrongly, the concierge is popularly regarded as a person addicted to gossip and given to extreme credulity; one can hardly say anything worse of a man than that he has "un mentalité de concierge." In any case, it is so generally recognised that the information obtained by the police about individuals is not worth serious consideration that "rapport de police" is a slang expression for any kind of obviously untrue report about a person. Indeed, one of the worst effects of the French police system is that it utterly discredits the police, in whom the public has as little confidence as it has in the administration of justice, for reasons which we shall consider later. The police are intensely unpopular in France, even with honest people, and in many cases people will suffer an injustice or a wrong rather than resort to them, such is the suspicion with which they are regarded. A French crowd is rarely willing to give assistance even to an ordinary policeman in the exercise of his duty. Indeed, the French people as a whole regard the police as their enemies. This is the nemesis of an arbitrary system which takes no

account of justice and has no regard for individual rights.[1]

It may perhaps be useful to mention two examples of the untrustworthiness of police *dossiers* within my own knowledge: I could mention several others. A friend of mine on becoming a Minister for the first time was asked by the Minister of the Interior whether he would like to see his *dossier*. He said that he would, and it was shown to him. Therein he read that he was in close relations with a certain trade union leader of revolutionary opinions, whom he was in the habit of meeting two or three times a week. Now the Minister in question, as he told me, had some acquaintances among the trade union leaders, but the particular one mentioned he had never spoken to in his life and did not even know by sight. The other example concerns myself. It was, and probably still is, recorded in my *dossier* that in 1911 I was in close relations with Mannesmann Brothers, the German firm in Morocco which had difficulties with the French Government. In fact, I have never in my life had the smallest connection of any kind with the firm in question, which I know only by name, like everyone else. I have since discovered the possible explanation of this fiction: a paper with which I was connected received in 1911 occasional contributions from an Englishman in Morocco, whose name bore no resemblance to mine, but who may, for all I know, have had business or other relations with Mannesmann Brothers. Perhaps I may add another personal

[1] The methods of what Georges Courteline has called "ces deux vieilles ennemies acharnées des gens de bien : l'administration et la loi" have often provoked the irony of French authors, and French literature is full of stories exposing their injustice. The masterpiece of this kind is Anatole France's "Crainquebille"; a lighter example is Courteline's short story, "Un Monsieur a trouvé une montre," in which occurs the phrase just quoted.

experience which, although it does not relate to the matter of *dossiers*, is an amusing example of the senseless way in which the French police wastes its time. In 1912 a committee was formed in Paris to take up the case of a soldier called Rousset, who had been convicted of murder in Africa in circumstances which unpleasantly recalled the Dreyfus case, although in the case of Rousset the motive was personal, not political, rancour. The committee succeeded in proving conclusively that Rousset was innocent and the conviction was ultimately quashed. The president of the committee was M. Anatole France, and it was composed of men of the highest reputation in politics, literature, religion and other callings, with very different opinions on all matters. Being a foreigner, I did not, of course, join the committee, but I was asked to allow it to meet at my flat, which happened to be in a central situation convenient for all the members. I did so, and the meetings were held from time to time at about 8.30 p.m., and lasted perhaps until about 10 o'clock. Immediately after the first meeting the concierge of the house in which I lived was visited by the police, who put him through a severe cross-examination and requested him to supply them with information about all the people that came to my flat and anything else that he could discover. Detectives were told off to watch the house day and night, and the unfortunate concierge's life was made a burden to him by the frequent visits of the police. Finally, I received a letter from my landlord saying that he had been informed by the police that I was holding in my flat "conciliabules nocturnes" of dangerous and revolutionary persons, who remained there until the small hours of the morning, and requesting me to desist from such practices. Instead of desisting, I

at once had the matter reported to M. Steeg, who was then Minister of the Interior, and he ordered the police to desist from their kind attentions. Let it not be thought that I was the object of those attentions merely because I was a foreigner; this is the sort of thing to which any French citizen may be and often is subjected. A Frenchman's house is not his castle so far as the State and the police are concerned. The police have the power to make domiciliary visits on the slightest excuse to the homes of persons not charged with any offence against the law and to overhaul all their private papers. Even correspondence is not sacred, for the *Cabinet Noir* is a permanent institution, and letters are frequently intercepted in the post and opened secretly. All these methods have, of course, been aggravated during the war by martial law, but it is not my intention here to speak of what happened during the war; the system that I have described is the normal one which functions in time of peace. It is condemned by the vast majority of the French people, but it does not seem to occur to them that they could change it if they would only take the trouble. In France more than anywhere, everybody's business is nobody's business.

Not only has the French police imitated the methods of the Russian, but it has also, since the Russian Alliance, which had as disastrous an influence on the internal affairs as on the foreign policy of France, closely co-operated with the Russian Secret Police. There have been times when the Russian Secret Police was given a free hand in France in regard to Russian subjects, even if they happened to be Poles or Finns. When M. Ribot was Prime Minister in the 'nineties, in the early days of the Alliance, Parisian concierges were used by the Russian police, with the consent of the

French authorities, to intercept correspondence of tenants. Large numbers of Russian and Polish refugees, who had fled from the tyranny of the Tsardom to the country of the Revolution, have been expelled from France for no reason at all except that the Russian Embassy or the Russian Secret Police desired their expulsion.[1] One of these expulsions—that of Trotsky—has cost France dear. When Trotsky was expelled in August 1916, at the request of M. Isvolsky, the Russian Ambassador, he said to the agents who came to conduct him to the frontier: "Tell your Minister of Foreign Affairs that the time is not far distant when I will meet him as an equal." He has kept his word, and it was no doubt in order that he might keep it that he became Commissioner for Foreign Affairs in the first Bolshevik Administration. There can also be no doubt that Trotsky's natural though not very generous personal rancour for the treatment that he had received had a considerable influence on his policy, which might otherwise not have been anti-French. It must be said as some excuse for his bitterness that the French police pursued him after his expulsion with vindictive malice, and that he and his family were for a time almost reduced to starvation. Trotsky, who had been earning a bare subsistence by the publication of a Russian paper in France, was penniless at the time of his expulsion. He first went to Switzerland, but was expelled from that country at the instigation of the French Government; he then took refuge in Spain, where the representations of the French police caused him to be arrested and imprisoned; the Spanish Socialists obtained his release, and he went

[1] The Minister of the Interior has absolute power to expel any foreigner from France at any time without giving any reason.

to the United States, where he remained until the Russian Revolution. It was a certain poetic justice that enabled this man within little more than a year of his expulsion to speak in the name of Russia to the Government that had tracked and persecuted him.

Enough has been said to show that nothing could be less democratic than the French administration. The political Constitution and the legislature seem at first sight more democratic, and in some respects they are, but they are very far from realising the conditions of true democracy. This is not surprising, since the French Constitution was the work of Monarchists who did not want a Republic and whose intention it was to frame a Constitution which could easily be adapted to a monarchical regime. Indeed, the French Constitution could be so adapted by the mere transference to the Monarch of the rights and powers of the President of the Republic, which are considerably greater than those of the King of England. The Royalists had a large majority in the National Assembly elected in 1871, which, in spite of the opposition of Gambetta and the Republicans, made peace with Germany and consented to the cession of Alsace-Lorraine. No other course was possible in the circumstances, and it would have been madness to continue a hopeless struggle; Gambetta had with the best intentions done great harm to his country by continuing it so long, for France was offered, after the battle of Sedan and the fall of the Second Empire, better terms of peace than she afterwards obtained. It was because the peasants, with their usual good sense, recognised that fact that they returned a Royalist majority to the National Assembly. The National Assembly, then, had no intention of setting up a Republic; but for the

obstinate refusal of the Comte de Chambord to abandon the Lilies of France for the Tricolour, that pious and stupid prince would certainly have become King of France, although he probably would not have remained long on the throne. When circumstances made a Republic inevitable, the National Assembly acquiesced with great reluctance; it was by a majority of one that it consented to confer on Thiers the title of "Chief of the Executive of the French Republic." In spite of this reluctant acquiescence, the majority of the Assembly still hoped to restore the Monarchy sooner or later, and, when the Constitution was framed in 1875, it was, as I have said, framed in that hope and with the express purpose of making a restoration easy. Hence it is that France has still a Royalist Constitution, for the amendments made in it since have not destroyed its essential monarchist character.

The French Constitution was modelled as far as possible on the British, and differs profoundly from the Constitution of the United States of America. The American President is his own Prime Minister; he forms the Cabinet as he pleases, and the Executive is not responsible to Congress, which cannot dismiss it; the Cabinet remains in office, even though there be a majority against it in both Houses. The American system of government, in fact, is not parliamentary government at all, since Parliament has no effective control over the Executive except in certain specified regards—for example, a treaty requires the ratification of the Senate. It is really an elective autocracy lasting in each case for four years and is very far from being democratic, for democracy in the true sense of the term implies the constant control of the Executive; that control may be exercised in

different ways, but it must exist. In America it does not exist: the President of the United States has more personal power than the German Emperor ever had and is now the only autocrat left in the civilised world. The President of the French Republic, on the other hand, is a constitutional monarch elected for seven years. The Constitution gives him the right to appoint the Ministers, but in fact he appoints only the Prime Minister, who chooses his own colleagues. No doubt the President may, and sometimes does, object to a particular choice, but if the Prime Minister stands firm he is almost sure to have his own way. For the Constitution implies that a Ministry must have a majority in Parliament and must resign if it has not; and if the Prime Minister be really the choice of Parliament he can always successfully resist the President of the Republic. Only one President in the history of the Third Republic—Marshal MacMahon—has attempted to overrule Parliament by forcing on it a Prime Minister that it did not want; the country condemned the attempt at a general election, and Marshal MacMahon himself eventually had to resign. When in May 1914 M. Poincaré entrusted M. Ribot with the formation of a Cabinet, although he was obviously not acceptable to the majority of the Chamber, the new Ministry was defeated in the Chamber on its first appearance before it, and of course at once resigned. The French system of government is therefore a true parliamentary system like the British, which is not to say that it is really democratic.

The Constitution confers important powers on the President of the Republic, but they are not quite personal like those of the President of the United States, for no act of the French President is valid unless it is countersigned by a Minister.

Nevertheless, these powers are excessive and one of them in particular is extremely dangerous. The President of the Republic has the disposal of the French military and naval forces and has the power to sign treaties, which he is not bound to make known to Parliament until he thinks it opportune to do so. It is this last power that is so dangerous. In order to be valid and binding on the French people, treaties, with certain exceptions, have only to be signed by the President of the Republic and a single Minister.[1] The President and the Prime Minister or the Minister of Foreign Affairs can therefore make a secret treaty, not merely without consulting Parliament, but even without consulting the Cabinet; two men have the power to commit the French people without their knowledge or consent to obligations which may involve the risk of their lives and property and the gravest danger to the country. Nor is this merely an hypothesis; it has often occurred. M. Poincaré and M. Briand made the Agreement of February 1917 with the Russian Government without consulting the Cabinet. M. Albert Thomas, who was a member of M. Briand's Cabinet, knew nothing about the Agreement until the following June, when, on his return from Russia, he was informed of it by M. Ribot, who had then succeeded M. Briand as Prime Minister. But the worst example of all is that of the Franco-Russian Alliance. The fact of the Alliance was formally proclaimed in 1897 and it had been concluded five or six years earlier. Yet in 1914, when the Alliance, as Jaurès had foreseen more than

[1] The exceptions are peace treaties, commercial treaties, and treaties that involve public expenditure or are concerned with the status or property of French citizens abroad, all of which have to be ratified by Parliament No territory can be ceded, annexed, or exchanged without the sanction of a special law.

a quarter of a century before, dragged France into war,[1] the French people, and even prominent French politicians, were still totally ignorant of its conditions and of the provisions of the treaties which constituted it. They did not know what were the obligations to which they had been committed—whether, for instance, France was compelled by the treaties to go to the aid of Russia if the latter were attacked by Germany alone, or only if she were attacked by two Powers. Supposing that the latter hypothesis were the true one, France could have undertaken to remain neutral when Germany asked her to do so after the German declaration of war on Russia on August 1, 1914. Whether it would or would not have been wise for France to remain neutral is a question into which I do not now propose to enter; in any case, the French people, and the French people alone, had the right to make the choice and should have been given the opportunity of making it. The French people had, in fact, no voice in the matter, and could not, even had it been consulted, have made a choice without knowing what its obligations to Russia were. The provisions of the French Constitution in this regard are the negation of democracy, for they deprive the people, its representatives, and even the Cabinet, of any effective control over foreign policy. In this regard the French Republic is not one whit more democratic than was the German Empire.

[1] In an article contributed to the *Dépêche de Toulouse* on February 26, 1887, Jaurès, who at that time was not yet a Socialist, strongly opposed the Russian Alliance, which was then being discussed, on the ground that the next great war would be caused by a quarrel between Austria and Russia about the Balkans, and that an alliance with Russia would drag France into it. (See preface of "Jean Jaurès," by Charles Rappoport, 2nd edition.)

The Constitution forbids a declaration of war without the consent of Parliament, but this provision is of little practical use, for a Government can always take the preliminary steps for war and put Parliament in face of a *fait accompli*. The case did not arise in August 1914, since Germany declared war on France; but the Government took care not to summon Parliament, which was in vacation at the time, until war had been declared. In a really democratic country Parliament would be summoned the moment there seemed to be any danger of war and would be consulted about every step in the negotiations. Had all the negotiations that preceded the war been conducted publicly in the face of the world, it is probable that there would have been no war, for all the peoples would then have understood what their diplomatists were up to. In defiance of the Constitution, the French Government declared war on Austria and on Turkey without consulting Parliament, which has completely acquiesced in the infringement of its rights, and those of the French people; the question has never been raised in the Senate or Chamber. Since the Armistice the French Government has unconstitutionally conducted military operations against the Russian Soviet Government without declaring war.

The French Legislature consists of two Houses, the Chamber of Deputies, elected by manhood suffrage, and the Senate, chosen by an electorate composed of the Deputies, the members of the *conseils-généraux* and *conseils d'arrondissement*, and delegates from the Municipal Councils.[1]

[1] For a senatorial election the electoral college assembles at the chief town of the department. The first poll is taken from 8 a.m. to noon; if no candidate obtains a clear majority of all the votes cast, another poll is taken from 2 to 5 p.m., and if that also is without result, there is a third from 7 to 10 p.m.,

There are 300 senators; 100 are elected every three years and hold office for nine years; nobody is eligible for election to the Senate until he is at least forty years old. By the original Constitution seventy-five Senators were elected for life by the Senate itself (in the first instance by the National Assembly), but this was altered in 1887. The number of Senators for each department is not proportionate to its population, and the municipal councils of the large towns are very much under-represented in the electoral colleges.[1] The result

at which the candidate obtaining the highest number of votes is elected. But no candidate can be elected unless he obtains the votes of at least one-fourth of the electors on the register. In case of equality of votes between two candidates, the elder is elected. Even if there be only one candidate at an election, a poll must be taken and at least one-fourth of the electors must record their votes for the candidate in order to secure his election. The ballot at senatorial elections, as at all French elections, is secret; the safeguards of secrecy are now very rigorous and effective

[1] Seven colonial departments and the Territory of Belfort have one senator each, ten departments have two each, fifty-two three, twelve four, and ten five each; the Nord has eight senators and the Seine ten The population of the Seine (1911) is 4,154,042. rather more than one-tenth of the whole population of France, so that the department should have at least thirty senators; in fact it has half the representation of the ten departments with two senators each, whose aggregate population is only 1,953,760. The Paris municipal council has thirty delegates at a Senatorial election, the councils of other towns with more than 60,000 inhabitants have twenty-four, and the number varies from one to twenty-one in the other cases; the councils of communes with less than 500 inhabitants have one delegate, those of communes with more than 500 but not more than 1,500 inhabitants have two, and so on In 1911 more than half the communes of France (19,270 out of 36,241) had less than 500 inhabitants; these communes, with an aggregate population of about five millions, have 19,270 votes for the Senate, whereas Paris, with a population of nearly three millions, has only thirty. A concrete example of the working of the system in a department will show its injustice. The department of the Rhône has twenty-nine cantons, of which eight are in Lyons, and 269 communes The municipal council of Lyons, which has a population of 523,796, has twenty-four delegates at a senatorial election; the councils

is that the rural districts enormously preponderate in the election of the Senate, which is always a conservative body, especially in regard to social and labour questions; it is also always anti-clerical and the majority of its members are always Radicals. But as Sir Charles Dilke said to M. Emile Vandervelde, speaking of an English Tory politician who was particularly hostile to all reform, "He is as conservative as a French Radical." At the general election of 1914, 101 Socialists were elected to the Chamber of Deputies, but there is not and there has never been a single Socialist in the Senate; that fact alone shows that the Senate does not represent the country.

The Chamber of Deputies is elected every four years. Until 1919 the system was that of single-member constituencies (*scrutin d'arrondissement*), except for a short interval during which there was *scrutin de liste*—that is to say, the constituency was the department, and the elector had as many votes as there were deputies to be elected, but could not give more than one vote to any candidate. The latter system, which meant that a party having a bare majority could elect all the deputies of a department, was in force at only one general election—that of 1886—and its results were so unsatisfactory that in 1889 the *scrutin d'arrondissement* was restored. The *scrutin de liste* might, indeed, easily produce a Parliament in which the majority represented a minority of the voters. In July 1919, however, the *scrutin de liste* was again

of the other 268 communes, whose aggregate population is 391,785, have 674 delegates. Since every canton, whatever its population, has one representative on the *conseil-général*, Lyons returns only eight of the twenty-nine members of the *conseil-général* of the Rhône (all of whom have votes for the Senate), and is also swamped there. It will be seen that the system on which the Senate is elected is a caricature of representation.

applied, a department would not be entitled to two Deputies unless it had more than 112,500 French inhabitants, and would have three Deputies only if its French population exceeded 187,500; but either *scrutin de liste* or proportional representation necessitates at least three Deputies for every constituency. The proper solution would have been to group small departments, as was indeed proposed during the discussion of the law; but it was decided that no department, whatever its population, should have less than three Deputies. The over-representation of the rural districts, which was one of the greatest faults of the old system, will therefore be continued, but only to a small extent.[1] The law further provided that all the departments should retain their old representation until a new census had been taken, with the result that there will be considerable inequalities in the representation of the departments at the general election of 1919.[2] Each elector has

[1] In 1911 there were only two departments with a population not exceeding 112,500 and two with a population exceeding that figure but not exceeding 187,500, so that there will be only four departments over-represented when the new law is fully applied, unless, as is possible, the next census should show that the number of departments with not more than 187,500 inhabitants has increased.

[2] At present every department has at least one deputy for each of its *arrondissements*, however small their population may be For example, Basses-Alpes, with a population of 107,231, and Hautes-Alpes, with a population of 105,083, have respectively five and three deputies. Aube, whose population is 240,755, has six deputies, because one of its five *arrondissements* having more than 100,000 inhabitants is entitled to two, although each of the other four *arrondissements* has a population of less than 40,000, and one of them has only 26,684 inhabitants Under the new law Aube will eventually be entitled to only three deputies, unless its population should have increased, as is improbable. These are but examples of the general over-representation of the rural departments, which the new law will correct to a very great extent. The seventeen departments with a

as many votes as there are Deputies to be elected, but can give only one vote to each candidate. The candidates are presented in lists, which may include as many names as there are Deputies to be elected or any smaller number down to one. The elector can either vote for a list as a whole or make a list of his own selection from the various candidates nominated. Any candidate that obtains at the poll a clear majority of all the voters is declared elected; if, therefore, the whole list of a particular party is supported by more than half the voters, that party returns the whole of the Deputies for the constituency—the Nord, which is undivided, has twenty-three. If no candidate obtains a clear majority, or if the number of candidates that obtain it is less than the number of Deputies to be elected, the seats, or the remnant of them, are distributed among the various lists on the Belgian system of proportional representation. The "electoral quotient" is obtained by dividing the total number of voters by the number of Deputies to be elected, and the average of each list is arrived at by dividing the aggregate number of votes obtained by the list by the number of candidates on it. The number of seats allotted to each list is the number of times that its average contains the electoral quotient. If there still remain seats to be filled, they are allotted to the lists having the largest average.[1] On each list the seats are

population not exceeding 262,500, which will under the new law be entitled to only three deputies each, have at present an aggregate of sixty-seven deputies.

[1] For example, take a constituency with five deputies to elect, 60,000 voters and three lists, whose respective aggregate polls are 148,000, 80,000, and 72,000 One of the candidates on List A obtains 33,000 votes and is, therefore, elected; no other candidate has more than 30,000 votes There remain four seats to be filled The electoral quotient is 12,000, and the averages are · List A, 29,600; List B, 16,000; List C, 14,400. Two of

allotted to the candidates obtaining the largest number of votes or, in case of equality, to the oldest of them. Unless more than half the electors go to the poll, or if no list has enough votes to contain the electoral quotient, the election is invalid, and another poll is held a fortnight later, when, if the same circumstances occur, the candidates obtaining the largest number of votes are elected. Vacancies occurring during the first three and a half years of a Parliament are filled by bye-elections; during the last six months of a Parliament vacancies are not filled at all.

So far as the Chamber of Deputies is concerned the French legislative system is, therefore, as democratic as any other parliamentary system, but the Constitution takes away with one hand what it has given with the other. The Chamber elected by popular suffrage and the Senate elected by restricted suffrage have, with one exception, the same rights and powers; the Senate is more than a Second Chamber, it is a co-ordinate Chamber.[1] The one

the remaining seats will be allotted to List A, which will have altogether three deputies, and each of the other lists will have one deputy. This result is the same as it would be with a system of purely proportional representation and is sufficiently just. But supposing that two candidates on List A obtained respectively 32,000 and 31,000 votes, they would both be elected at once, and there would remain only three seats to be filled. On the proportional system List A would be entitled to two more seats, and the other two lists to one each, so that there would not be enough seats to go round. In these circumstances the law provides that the seats shall be attributed to the candidates on whatever list having the largest number of votes If, as is probable, all the candidates on List A had more votes than any candidate on either of the other lists, List A would be allotted all the three seats, and would have all the five deputies although it had not a clear majority of the votes It will be seen that the system leaves much to chance.

[1] The Senate has also judicial functions It sits as a High Court to try the President of the Republic or Ministers for "crimes committed in the exercise of their functions," and as

exception is that the Senate cannot initiate financial legislation, a term which includes any measure involving special expenditure, but the Senate can reject the Budget and amend it as it pleases. Such a system must inevitably be unworkable and experience has shown it to be so. There is no means of settling a difference between the two Houses except that of a joint committee, which can only make recommendations and usually results in an unsatisfactory compromise. The Senate can and does obstruct for an indefinite period measures that have been passed by the Chamber; it does not, as a rule, reject them, but simply hangs them up for years. That is easy, since in the French Parliament a Bill does not lapse at the end of a session if it has not been passed, or even at the end of a Parliament; it is taken up in each new session or new Parliament at the point where it was left by the last. The Income Tax Bill was passed by the Chamber in 1909 and did not get through the Senate until 1914; it should have come into force in January 1915, but its operation was postponed on account of the war, and it was not completely applied until 1918, and then in a diluted form. The shocking backwardness of France in regard to all social legislation is undoubtedly due chiefly to

a Court of Justice to try any person accused of an "attempt against the security of the State" The President of the Republic cannot be tried by any other tribunal and can be indicted only by the Chamber of Deputies. A Minister can be indicted for crimes committed in the exercise of his functions before the ordinary tribunals or before the Senate; in the latter case he can be indicted only by the Chamber of Deputies. The Government can send for trial before the Senate any person accused of an attempt against the security of the State, but such persons can also be indicted before the ordinary tribunals M Malvy was sent for trial before the Senate by the Chamber, at his own request, in 1918, and M. Caillaux, after having first been indicted before a military tribunal, was sent for trial before the Senate by the Government.

the Senate, which has been a far worse drag on democracy and progress than the House of Lords—probably with its present restricted powers the least pernicious Second Chamber in the world. The French Constitution stultifies the Chamber of Deputies and renders it powerless by refusing it in the last resource the final decision, which should belong to the direct representatives of the people. A Second Chamber, to be at all tolerable, should have powers only of postponement and revision; the Senate has the power to make legislation impossible. Even the measures of social reform that it has at last consented to pass have nearly all been emasculated. A case in point is the Old Age Pensions Law, which the Senate reduced to a mean and niggardly measure and which has proved a complete failure; it is, indeed, almost a dead letter, as the great majority of people refuse to pay the contribution required in order to obtain a pension, and the Government dares not enforce the law.

Thus the French Constitution requires drastic reforms in order to make the political system not only democratic, but even workable, for it can never work smoothly until the powers of the Senate are limited; a system of two co-ordinate Houses of Parliament is an absurdity. But the suppression of the Senate is demanded by the parties of the Left and the existence of a Second Chamber is indefensible from a democratic point of view; its only *raison d'être* is to be a check on democracy. If the German Empire could do without a Second Chamber, surely the French Republic can. On the other hand, we have to reckon with "the never-ending audacity of elected persons," and it would not be satisfactory to give uncontrolled power for four years to 600 Deputies; some means must be found of keeping them under the constant control of

the people, whether by referendum, the power of revocation in certain conditions, or what not.

The control of the Executive by the legislature is as necessary as the control of the legislature itself by the people. The power of making treaties must be taken out of the hands of the President of the Republic, and, as in the United States, no treaty must be valid until it has been approved by Parliament. French opinion of the Left is unanimously in favour of this reform, which would make secret treaties impossible. But this is not enough: the Ministers, as in Switzerland, must be individually elected by the Chamber of Deputies, which would, of course, retain the power to dismiss them when it pleased. Nor should the dismissal of a single Minister entail the resignation of his colleagues; each Minister should be individually responsible to the Parliament which had elected him.[1] In fact, the Cabinet system should be abolished and replaced by an Administration which would be an executive committee of Parliament. The theory of Ministerial solidarity has in France, as in England, been mischievous in its results, for it has again and again covered individual incapacity. A Parliament may be convinced that a particular Minister is mismanaging his department, but it will naturally hesitate to censure him if such a course involves the resignation of a Government with which it is satisfied as a whole. A case in point was that of M. Millerand, Minister of War in the second Viviani Cabinet, which came into power at the end

[1] M Marcel Sembat has proposed that no member of Parliament shall be eligible for office as a Minister. There is much to be said for this proposal, provided, of course, that the Ministers are directly elected by the Chamber In France at present a Minister need not be a member of Parliament, and, in any case, he has the right to speak, although not to vote, in both Houses of Parliament.

of August 1914. Early in 1915 it was already evident that drastic changes in the methods of the Ministry of War were urgently necessary. The supply of munitions was quite inadequate and no effort was being made to increase production; the General Staff of the French Army continued to oppose the use of heavy artillery in the field, in spite of the experience of the war; and the Director of Armaments was a General who refused on principle to supply the Army with anything but 75 guns, holding that even rifles were useless. M. Millerand obstinately defended the obscurantist policy of the Ministry of War and refused to listen to the repeated demands of the Army Committees of the Senate and the Chamber for a change in methods and persons. The Army Committee of the Senate, of which M. Clemenceau was president, sent to the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister an exhaustive report on the situation which was a damning and unanswerable indictment of M. Millerand's administration. M. Viviani made more than one effort to induce M. Millerand to resign, but the latter persistently refused to do so. When the matter was raised in the Chamber, M. Viviani made it a question of confidence and defended M. Millerand, who, as the Chamber would not take the responsibility of overturning the Government, remained in office for more than a year with disastrous consequences to France and her Allies.

These reforms in the Constitution would make it unnecessary to retain the office of President of the Republic, which could be suppressed. Only his ceremonial functions would remain and those could quite well be performed by the Prime Minister for the time being. It would also be unnecessary to preserve the power of dis-

solving the Chamber. At present the President of the Republic—that is, in practice, the Prime Minister—has the right to dissolve the Chamber with the consent of the Senate. The right has been exercised only once in the history of the Third Republic—by Marshal MacMahon in 1877. The circumstances in which it was exercised have prevented any of his successors from attempting to follow his example, but it is a mistake to say, as is commonly said, that the dissolution of the Chamber by Marshal MacMahon was unconstitutional, for the consent of the Senate was obtained to it. What was unconstitutional was Marshal MacMahon's previous conduct in dismissing a Ministry that had the confidence of the Chamber and appointing one that had not. So long as the present system of nominating Ministers continues, it may be desirable to retain the power of dissolution; there have been occasions during the present century when no Government could secure a permanent majority in the Chamber and when a dissolution might have cleared the air. But, if and when the Ministers are directly and individually elected by the Chamber, it would be enough to give a certain proportion of the electors in any constituency the right to demand at any time a poll on the question of withdrawing their Deputy's mandate. The duration of Parliament should also be reduced to two years, or three at most.

CHAPTER IV

THE DISCREDIT OF PARLIAMENT AND ITS CAUSES

"How I laughed till I cried, rocking myself to and fro, in my pleasure at recognising in all their perfection those two old and implacable enemies of the honest man: the Administration and the Law"—GEORGES COURTELINE.

THE French Socialist Party will go to the country at the next election with a programme including the immediate reform of the Constitution more or less on the lines indicated in the last chapter, but a reform of the French Constitution is not an easy matter. Amendments of the Constitution can be made only by the National Assembly—the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies sitting together as one House—and the National Assembly can be summoned for the purpose only by a resolution adopted by a clear majority of all the members of the Senate and the Chamber. It is improbable that 151 Senators would consent to a meeting of the National Assembly if they thought that the abolition of the Senate would be proposed, as it certainly would be; and if the Senators voted solidly at the National Assembly against their own suppression, it would have to be supported by more than three-fourths of the Chamber in order to be passed. Moreover, it may be too late for any reform, however drastic, of the present Constitution. The

Socialist Party in its manifesto on the subject spoke of such a reform as an immediate necessity, not as a complete satisfaction of its ultimate demands. It declared that revolution was necessary, and that it must be effected by direct action if necessary; it also declared that the revolution would probably be followed by a temporary "dictatorship of the proletariat." In fact, the Parliamentary system is gravely discredited in France; anti-parliamentarism is rapidly increasing and is of two kinds—reactionary and revolutionary. The reactionaries wish to substitute autocratic for Parliamentary government; the revolutionaries tend more and more towards a system resembling that of the Russian Soviet Republic, based on decentralisation and communal autonomy. This is no new ideal in France: the Commune of Paris in 1871 was not unlike the Soviet system in a French form, and the Commune has never lost its hold on the imaginations and sympathies of French revolutionaries, who still regard it as an unsuccessful but glorious attempt to realise their ideals. Every year the Parisian Socialists and Trade Unionists make a solemn pilgrimage to the "mur des fédérés"—the wall in Père-Lachaise cemetery in front of which the communards were shot by the soldiers of General de Gallifet. A large plot of ground adjoining the wall has been acquired by the Socialist party as a burying-ground for its members.

It is impossible to deny that the growing discontent with the Parliamentary system in France has too much justification. I have already said that there are many signs of an approaching end of the present regime. Among them is the huge crop of political scandals during the last two years; for political regimes in France have a habit of foundering in an ocean of scandals—the affair of

the necklace was a considerable factor in the downfall of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette. Some of the recent political scandals have no doubt been manufactured by personal or political rancour, but they are none the less evidence of a state of nervosity and uneasiness in the public mind. It has always been a weakness of the French to attribute reverses of fortune to treason, but the hunt for traitors that has been going on during the war has been on an unprecedented scale. Moreover, political passion has never been so high nor class feeling so bitter as since the inauguration of the "Union Sacrée." The decadence of Parliament is another symptom of approaching crisis. Among its principal causes are: (1) the unworkable system established by the Constitution which has enabled the Senate to paralyse Parliament; (2) the consequent barren record of the Third Republic in regard to reforms, especially social reforms; (3) the neglect by Parliament of economic questions; (4) the multiplicity of political parties and groups, which makes a homogeneous Ministry impossible and forces Governments to depend on a composite majority of which the elements vary from time to time; (5) the demoralising influence of the Parliamentary atmosphere on the Senators and Deputies and their tendency to shirk responsibilities; (6) the corruption in French politics.

We have already seen how the Constitution enables the Senate to paralyse Parliament. The result is that France is behind England and Germany in industrial and social legislation; it has a miserably inadequate system of old age pensions; it has no system of national insurance against sickness or accidents; its Factory Acts are quite inadequate and are not properly enforced; there is no proper inspection of factories and workshops, the

conditions in which are often terribly insanitary; women and girls and even children are allowed to be worked scandalously long hours; there is almost no public sanitation at all.[1] During the whole of my twelve years' residence in Paris I have never heard of a sanitary inspector, much less had a visit from one; yet there are expensive flats in Paris the sanitary arrangements of which would not be tolerated for a moment in any English town. A large proportion of the houses in Paris are still unattached to the main drainage system and are drained into cesspools. I know a street in the Faubourg St. Germain where all the houses are in that condition. The landlords were ordered to abolish the cesspools and attach the houses to the main drainage system about fifteen years ago; they have not done so yet and nobody shows the least disposition to make them—one of them is a high official in a Government department. The majority of the concierges' lodges in Paris are unfit for human habitation and are breeding grounds of disease, and the majority of the servants' bedrooms—which in a Parisian apartment house are all together on the top floor—are cupboards without proper light or ventilation. I have more than once declined to take a flat because I refused to ask any human being to sleep in such places. All this continues because the propertied classes are the complete masters of France and not one of the bourgeois political parties

[1] A general Eight Hours Law was passed in May 1919, but it simply established the principle of an eight-hour day and left the application to each trade to be settled by *Règlements d'administration publique*, that is to say regulations with the force of law (answering to Orders in Council) made by the Government after taking the advice of the *Conseil d'Etat*, or by further laws The application of the eight-hour day to the mines was regulated by a law passed in June 1919. In most other trades it has not yet been applied and is not likely to be It was a mere vote-catching device never intended to be put into force.

dares to touch their pockets. Yet enormous sums of public money are being spent to cure tuberculosis while the insanitary conditions which make the ratio of that terrible disease much higher than in England are left untouched.[1]

The Senate is not entirely to blame for this state of things. What is particularly surprising is that even the Socialist party has never seriously tackled matters of this kind, although one would have thought that they were its particular business. This is not because of any doctrinaire objection to merely palliative measures or any all-or-nothing policy; for the Socialist party devoted itself for six years to the anti-clerical campaign, which had no direct connection with Socialism although it undoubtedly promoted its growth, and later concentrated all its energies for several years on Proportional Representation. The exaggerated importance attached by Jaurès to the latter reform was, indeed, the greatest mistake of his political career, for it divided the forces of the Left—since the Radicals were opposed to P.R.—at a moment when the reaction once more became threatening, and by diverting attention from the growth of militarism and Chauvinism undoubtedly contributed to their triumph in 1912–1914 with all its disastrous consequences. Far from adhering too strictly to social and economic questions, the Socialist party has neglected them in practice almost as much as the other parties. It has been active in propagating Socialist doctrine—quite properly and rightly—but it has not concerned itself with immediate social and economic reforms, the advocacy of which would

[1] There are from 150,000 to 200,000 deaths from tuberculosis in France every year, and the general death-rate is very high, although the climate of the greater part of the country is remarkably healthy.

have enormously increased its hold on the country. Too many French Socialist Deputies have paid very little attention to economics; their socialism is little more than a vague aspiration. Hence it is that the Socialist party has never given serious consideration to the question of Free Trade and Protection, to the democratisation of the administrative system, or to the various questions that have just been mentioned. It has been too much disposed to restrict its advocacy of immediate reforms to an indiscriminate demand for State monopolies, which, as Jules Guesde has pointed out, do not at all conduce to the advent of Socialism or weaken in any way the capitalist system, and which in present economic conditions are usually pernicious. A bourgeois capitalist State is quite incompetent to control or administer industry; in France State monopolies are almost invariably mismanaged and the deplorable experience that the French people has had of their incompetence tends to discredit Socialism in so far as it is identified with them.[1] I am glad to say that there is now a strong reaction in the French Socialist party against Etatisme, which is not only different from, but even opposed to, social democracy, nor have all French Socialists acquiesced in their identification—Jules Guesde and the strict Marxists voted against the purchase by the State of the Western Railway of France, one of the worst bargains ever made by a Government.

The list of immediately urgent reforms is by no means exhausted; there are many other matters which the Socialist party might have taken up to its own advantage and that of the country. Generally speaking, French law favours the landlord against the tenant, the capitalist against the man

[1] See Chapter VII, page 235.

who earns his living, the creditor against the debtor. This is not a legal treatise and it is impossible to enter into this matter in detail, but one of the most glaring examples may be mentioned—the enormous powers given by the law to the owners of house property. A French landlord is allowed by the law to force a tenant to furnish and keep furnished a house or flat during the whole of his tenancy with objects of sufficient value to cover the rent of the whole period for which the premises are taken. The tenant not only has to pay the rent on quarter-day, but has to give the landlord a guarantee that he will be able to pay it until the end of his tenancy. If he has, for instance, a nine years' lease of a flat rented at £100 a year, he must put furniture in it to the value of at least £900, and, if he wishes to move before the end of the tenancy, the landlord can prevent him from taking away his furniture unless and until he has paid the whole of the rent for the unexpired term, even though the rent be fully paid up to date. The only alternative for the tenant is to find somebody else to take over the tenancy, and the landlord can arbitrarily refuse to accept any new tenant without giving any reason, unless there is a provision to the contrary in the lease or agreement. I have never consented to take a flat unless the landlord would agree to a provision limiting his power of refusal and I have found many landlords unwilling to agree to it. It must not be thought that this power is only theoretical. The landlord—or rather landlady, for it was a woman—of an Italian friend of mine who was called to Italy by the war refused out of mere spite to accept any other tenant and forced him to keep the flat rather than pay at once the rent of the two years of the lease which were unexpired. I am glad to add that in this case

Madame Vautour—the Parisian slang term for an owner of house property—was hoist with her own petard, for the Courts decided that my friend, the subject of an allied nation, was entitled to benefit by the moratorium which exempted all mobilised men from the payment of rent until six months after the signature of peace. Landlords also have the right under French law to force a tenant to pay three or six months' rent in advance on taking a house or flat, which amount is counted as payment for the last three or six months of the lease. The landlord has thus the use of his tenant's money without interest for the whole term of the lease, and he has further the right to confiscate the sum paid in the event of any breach of the lease on the part of the tenant without prejudice to any claim for damages. A tenant in France is compelled to insure against fire, not only the fabric of his own house or flat, but also those of his next-door neighbours' on either side of him. These are but some examples of the oppressive powers of French landlords. I cannot remember ever having read of a proposal that they should be diminished in any French paper or heard of one being made by any French politician, Socialist or other. Yet such matters as these are far more important to the people than the State ownership of a railway or the method of voting.

There is another matter in regard to which reform is urgently needed, perhaps more than any other—the judicial system. Much might be said about the delays of French civil procedure which remind one of the famous case of Jarndyce *v.* Jarndyce. I have reason to be informed on that subject, for I was the defendant in a civil case which began in January 1909, judgment was given in my favour in November 1917, and I have not yet obtained execution at

the time of writing (May 1919), although there was no appeal on either side. I paid the sum of money claimed from me into court, or rather into the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, which has had the use of it for ten years and does not seem anxious to give it up. It is fair to say that the war prolonged the case by perhaps three years; it would have lasted only a trifle of seven years or so in normal times.

But far more important to the nation is the criminal procedure, since it involves the loss of liberty, or even of life, to persons who may be innocent. I have said that the French public has no confidence in the administration of justice; I am now obliged to add that its want of confidence is fully justified. The French criminal procedure is quite literally mediæval—it is, in fact, the system of the Inquisition almost unchanged. In theory, French, like English, law presumes an accused person to be innocent until he is proved to be guilty; in practice, French judges assume him to be guilty until he has proved himself to be innocent. In France, the preliminary stage of a criminal case is called the *instruction*; the *juge d'instruction* answers to the magistrate before whom an English prisoner is first brought. I am speaking, of course, of important offences; lesser ones are dealt with directly by the *Tribunal Correctionel*, which answers to the English police court; it is composed of three judges sitting without a jury. The *juge d'instruction* has to decide whether or not an accused person shall be committed for trial, but his functions and methods are very different from those of the English magistrate who has the same duty. The magistrate need not go thoroughly into the merits of the case—when the accused reserves his defence, he cannot; all that he has to decide is

whether there is a primâ facie case for a jury, supposing that he is not himself competent to deal with the matter or does not think it desirable to do so. The fact that the magistrate commits a prisoner for trial does not necessarily mean that he believes him to be guilty nor does the magistrate think it his duty to try to prove the guilt of the prisoner; he is an arbiter between the prosecution and the defence. The *juge d'instruction*, on the other hand, is a collaborator of the prosecution, and his business is to try to establish the guilt of the accused person—indeed he begins by assuming his guilt. If he is finally convinced of the innocence of the accused, or even not convinced of his guilt, he returns a *non-lieu*, that is to say, he dismisses the case; he commits a prisoner for trial only if and when he himself believes him to be guilty, and he makes a report to that effect. It will be seen that the powers of a *juge d'instruction* are much greater than those of an English magistrate, and that the *instruction* is a much more important factor in a French criminal case than is the preliminary inquiry in an English one. Indeed the *instruction* in France is more important than the actual trial, for the report of the *juge d'instruction* is the most important evidence for the prosecution at the trial; it is a voluminous document giving the whole history of the case, the evidence of the witnesses heard during the *instruction*, and the judge's reasons for concluding that the prisoner is guilty. Whenever there is a miscarriage of justice in France, it can almost always be traced to the *instruction*; that is the experience of all that have investigated such cases.

The conditions in which the *instruction* takes place make a miscarriage of justice very probable. In the first place, the *instruction* is secret: until

recently counsel could not even be present at it, but for some years it has been the law that the accused must be accompanied by his counsel during his interviews with the *juge d'instruction.* Counsel is not, however, present at the examination of witnesses, although he has access to their depositions. This secrecy is most injurious to the accused, who is kept under a cloud for weeks and even months while the public has no means of judging the value of the charges against him, and it does not serve the ends of justice. It is obvious that secrecy gives the opportunity for irregularities, pressure, and abuses of all kinds, and, human nature being what it is, it would be unreasonable to expect the opportunity never to be used. One of the first and most essential guarantees of justice is publicity; the secrecy of the *instruction* is undoubtedly one of the chief causes of the distrust and suspicion with which the administration of justice is generally regarded in France. The law quite logically forbids the revelation or publication of any information about the *instruction*, but the law is not observed in practice. The newspapers interview witnesses as they leave the chambers of the *juge d'instruction* and publish their accounts of their own evidence, which are almost invariably inaccurate. All sorts of false or garbled reports of the proceedings appear in the Press, which sometimes also publishes communications of an obviously semi-official character illegally supplied to it by the *juge d'instruction* himself, or even by the Ministry of Justice. These communications usually aim at discrediting the accused and are often more tendencious than the ordinary newspaper reports. The accused has no remedy except that of protestation. Moreover, the newspapers are allowed to comment freely on the case while it is proceeding and to defend the thesis of the guilt

or innocence of the accused without even having the material for forming a judgment. As M. Pierre Mille once said in the *Temps*, in England the Press is allowed to know the facts of a case and the evidence given in it, but it is not allowed to comment on them until the verdict has been given: in France the Press is allowed to comment on them without knowing them. In the Steinheil murder case, to give only one example, the *Matin* was permitted to assume from the first that Mme. Steinheil was the murderer of her husband and her mother and to denounce a new person every other day as her accomplice, for there is no effective libel law in France.[1] The prejudice inevitably created by such methods as these in the minds of the jurors who

[1] The French law does not permit the justification of a libel; if the publication complained of is defamatory, the Court must condemn the defendant, whether it be true or not. The result is, on the one hand, that an action for libel cannot clear the prosecutor's character, and that the verdict carries no weight, and, on the other, that the Court, having no means of knowing whether the defamation is true or not, always inflicts trivial damages, which are no deterrent. Moreover, the delays in French procedure are such that an action for libel usually comes on so long after the publication of the libel that the latter is already forgotten and the harm, if any, has been done. Few people think it worth while to bring a libel action in these circumstances: the majority prefer, if they do anything, to use the right of reply—the French law obliges a paper which has attacked anybody to publish a reply from him in the same place and of the same length as the attack. But papers often refuse to obey the law in this regard and then prolonged legal proceedings are necessary to make them do so. The net result is that French papers publish with impunity outrageous calumnies on public men and even on private individuals, and some of them find a source of income in the threat of such publication. Press calumny is used, as Anatole France has said, by the capitalist interests to ruin any politician that has the courage and honesty to refuse to be ruled by them. M. Caillaux is one of the most conspicuous victims of this method. The lack of an effective libel law is the reason why French juries so often acquit people who have taken the law into their own hands by shooting the editor of a paper that has calumniated them.

eventually try the case need not be insisted upon; indeed, it is not surprising that miscarriages of justice are numerous in France. What is surprising is that there are not many more.[1]

In the secrecy of his chambers, uncontrolled by public opinion, the *juge d'instruction* subjects the accused person to a severe cross-examination with the object of entrapping him into compromising admissions. It may easily be imagined how an ignorant or stupid person is likely to fare in the hands of a skilled lawyer with the power to put him on the rack several times a week for months together, especially when he is physically and mentally weakened by long detention in solitary confinement. For bail is seldom granted in France, and detention is deliberately used as a means of pressure on an accused person in the hope that he will finally inculpate himself. Moreover, the conditions of what is called in France "preventive" imprisonment are much more severe than in England; the prisoner, whom the law assumes to be innocent, is not allowed to have any visitors except such as are authorised by the *juge d'instruction*, who has complete discretion in the matter. M. Caillaux, for instance, who will have been in prison for two years before his trial, has not, during

[1] Inquiries into violent or sudden deaths are also held in secret by a *juge d'instruction* and are sometimes very prolonged, lasting for many months While they last, if the case be in any way sensational, there are misleading and inaccurate reports in the Press, a crop of rumours more or less false, and a general atmosphere of suspicion. There are still people in France who believe that President Félix Faure was murdered, and that a disreputable Deputy, called Syveton, who committed suicide about fifteen years ago, was killed by M. Combes or by the Freemasons These and similar legends would never have grown up had a system of public inquests existed in France. Sudden deaths are not always investigated and a doctor's certificate is much too readily accepted as final.

the whole of that period, been allowed to receive any visitors except his wife and his counsel. Nobody supposed that M. Caillaux would fly the country if he were allowed out on bail, but it suited the purposes of the Government that he should not be at liberty; it is true that his case was at first in the hands of a military tribunal, but the same thing might have happened if it had been otherwise.

The length of time often taken by an *instruction* is one of the worst abuses of the French judicial system; in a case of any importance—political or other—it usually lasts a year or more. There is no Habeas Corpus Act in France and no legal limit to the time which an *instruction* may take. Nor is it necessary that there should be any evidence against an accused person before he is arrested. It is a common practice to arrest a man on mere suspicion and keep him in prison indefinitely while the *juge d'instruction* tries to find evidence against him and repeatedly cross-examines him in the hope of inducing him to commit himself; any self-respecting judge will wait a year before he gives up the attempt, especially if the Government in power has any particular reason for desiring a conviction. The case of the late M. Turmel was a bad example of this method. He was arrested simply because a number of Swiss bank notes were found in his locker at the Chamber of Deputies, and was kept in prison for months on a charge of treason, although no evidence of it was ever discovered. There is nothing illegal in possessing the bank notes of a neutral country in time of war and at first M. Turmel refused, on the advice of his counsel, to answer any questions. His refusal was quite legal, for there is no law compelling an accused person to answer any questions, but, as the judge declared his intention of keeping

M. Turmel in prison until he did answer, the latter at last gave various conflicting and obviously untrue accounts of the origin of the money. That fact shows that the origin was a shady one—an hypothesis widely credited in Paris was that M. Turmel had made money by houses of ill-fame in Switzerland—but it is no evidence of treason, and there is, in fact, not the smallest reason to suppose that M. Turmel was a traitor to his country, although he was not at all a reputable person. He ultimately died in prison protesting his innocence. In England the case against him would have been dismissed at the first or second hearing.

This case was also an example of the pernicious influence of politics on the administration of justice in France. It is probable that the treatment of M. Turmel was due to a hope that he might incriminate M. Caillaux; he was, in fact, induced to make some statements about M. Caillaux, but they were either so inaccurate or so unimportant that no use could be made of them, and they were not even mentioned by the Public Prosecutor in the indictment of M. Caillaux. In any case, whatever may have been behind the Turmel affair, there can be no doubt about political interference in judicial matters; the French system makes it inevitable. Justice in France is not independent; it is under the control of the Minister of Justice, that is to say, of a politician. It is the Minister of Justice who decides to what particular *juge d'instruction* a case is to be entrusted, and even what particular judge is to preside at the trial—there are three judges at a French criminal trial, but the President is the only one that counts. The Minister of Justice can and does transfer a case from one *juge d'instruction* to another at his will and pleasure; he fixes the

dates of trials and postpones them when he pleases, not that he has legally the power to postpone them, but he can instruct the Public Prosecutor to apply for a postponement, which is never refused by the Court in such circumstances. When Villain, the murderer of Jaurès, himself applied to the Court to postpone his trial until after the war, the application was opposed by the Public Prosecutor and refused. A fortnight later, the Government of the day having changed its mind, the Public Prosecutor himself applied for the postponement of the trial until after the war and it was granted. Villain was eventually tried four years and seven months after the date of the murder. What respect for the administration of justice can there be in a country where a court of justice acts in this way merely to suit the political convenience of a Government? It is not only for political reasons that pressure is brought to bear on judges. Accused persons have found it a great advantage to them to have a friend or acquaintance in the Cabinet or to know people that have; in this, as in other matters, influence—the *piston*—goes a long way in France. This is only to be expected, since the man on whom the advancement and the career of those who administer justice depend is also their legal superior. In the same way, the military judges are entirely under the control of the Minister of War, who is legally the "Chef de la Justice militaire," who instructs the Public Prosecutor, decides to whom the *instruction* is to be entrusted, and chooses, at least indirectly, the members of the court-martial. In Paris, the members of the court-martial are nominated by the military governor, who is under the direct orders of the Minister of War. This system helps to make the Dreyfus case more intelligible. The Public Prosecutor is no more

independent than the judges; he takes his orders from the Government. Nor is influence exercised only by politicians. In a case within my own knowledge in which a woman of good family with influential social connections was accused of a fraud, the *juge d'instruction* actually received personal friends of hers, not as witnesses, and was almost persuaded by their representations to dismiss the case. Only the firm attitude of the counsel for the plaintiff prevented him from doing so and he ultimately committed the lady for trial. One of the reasons given to him for letting her off was that she was a friend of King Edward VII.

Another evil is the way in which criminal procedure is abused by private persons for their own ends—usually to obtain payment of a debt. In France, anybody can lay an information ("déposer une plainte") against another; it is then for the Public Prosecutor to decide whether or not there is a primâ facie case for taking action against the person accused. Even if the accusation turns out to be quite baseless, the person unjustly accused has no remedy against the accuser; an action for malicious prosecution can lie only against a person who, instead of merely laying an information, has summoned another directly before the *Tribunal Correctionel.* The result is that "plaintes" are sent in recklessly, sometimes out of mere spite, sometimes by way of intimidation to recover a civil debt or for some similar reason. Although there is no publicity, the fact that a "plainte" has been made against a man is inscribed in his "casier judiciare" (police register), and if no action has been taken upon it that fact is not always recorded. Moreover, the author of the "plainte" usually takes care to tell people about it, and there are

always some ready to say that there is probably something in it. A "plainte" is thus sometimes an effective method of intimidating a timid person, especially since, as has already been said, all Frenchmen have a horror of any sort of contact with the police or the administration of justice.

French judicial procedure has some excellent points; for instance, criminal and civil proceedings can be taken at the same time against a person for the same matter. If, for example, X has defrauded Y of a sum of money, Y can move the Public Prosecutor to take criminal proceedings against X, in which Y can appear as "parti civil"; if X is convicted, the Court not only punishes him, but also gives judgment against him in Y's favour. But this system, excellent in itself, is sometimes abused owing to the practice in the less serious cases of allowing the criminal prosecution to be withdrawn if the accused pays up, which encourages the use of criminal procedure to recover a debt. The absence in French criminal trials of anything like the laws of evidence, which is often criticised by English lawyers, is, in my opinion, an advantage. The system of asking a witness to say what he knows about the case and allowing him to make his own statement instead of merely answering questions no doubt prolongs the proceedings, but I am convinced that it serves the ends of justice better than the English system. A witness thus allowed to say what he likes will almost invariably reveal his own character and, if he be not telling the truth, is almost sure to commit himself; for, of course, after having made his statements he can be cross-examined. What is objectionable is the cross-examination to which the prisoner in a criminal trial is subjected by the presiding judge,

who usually presumes his guilt. I believe that this practice is illegal and that strictly the President ought merely to put to the prisoner the formal questions about his name, place of residence, etc.; but, whether legal or not, the practice is universal and it ought to be stopped.[1]

It is not too much to say that the evils of French criminal procedure, and in particular of the secret *instruction*, are recognised by the vast majority of Frenchmen. I never met a criminal barrister who did not condemn the secret *instruction*, and an alteration of the law in this regard has been demanded for years by leading members of the French Bar. When M. Briand was Prime Minister for the first time he talked of abolishing the secret *instruction* and substituting for it a preliminary inquiry in public as in England. But he did not carry his intention into effect; it is possible that

[1] The profession of notary or solicitor (*avoué*) in France is a monopoly; the number of notaries and solicitors is limited, and nobody can enter either profession except by purchasing the practice of a retiring member of it. This objectionable system, which is a survival of the *ancien régime*, means that only men with money can become notaries or solicitors, and they sometimes have more money than brains, although, of course, they have to obtain certain qualifications French *avoués* are, as a rule, less competent than English solicitors and have a much less important position; a great deal of the work done in England by solicitors is done in France by barristers (*avocats*), who have, as a rule, more legal knowledge than the solicitors In France, a client can address himself to a barrister directly without passing through a solicitor, and it is very common to go first to a barrister, who instructs the solicitor, when it becomes necessary to call in his services, which are required by law for an action in the High Court The Bar is open to anybody that can pass the necessary examinations, and the French Bar is very brilliant. French judges are not, as in England, chosen from the Bar; the judicial profession is a separate one, in which men begin by holding the least important posts and can rise to the highest Judges of every rank are very badly paid and the standard is not so high as in England.

the proposed change was opposed by the *Parquet*[1] and the police. It is astonishing that no political party, not even the Socialist, has ever made a serious attempt to get rid of abuses which almost everybody condemns and which bring the administration of justice into contempt. The indifference of politicians in this regard is, unfortunately, typical, and the fact that it is so is one of the reasons why the parliamentary system is discredited.

I should, however, be sorry to give the impression that the Third Republic has done nothing. It has accomplished at least one great task—the liberation of France from clerical domination. The Education Law of 1882, due to Jules Ferry, which secularised the national schools and substituted lay teachers for the ecclesiastics and nuns who had until then taught in many of them, was a great achievement which has had an immense influence for good on France. Secular education has changed for the better in many regards the mentality of the bulk of the French people; it has produced more self-reliance and initiative and increased toleration. The elementary-school teachers are a fine body of men and women whose influence has been admirable. To them more than to any other body is due the diminution of Chauvinism and the growth of pacific and internationalist sentiment—there is a great difference in this regard between the generations that have been educated in the secular schools and their predecessors. The war, and in particular the victory, caused a recrudescence of Chauvinism, but it seemed more general than it really was, if only

[1] The chief Public Prosecutor's department in Paris There is an Assize Court with resident judges in the chief town of each department, and to each is attached a Public Prosecutor (*Procureur de la République*)

for the reason that during the war only Chauvinists were allowed to express their opinions. The seed sown in the elementary schools will yet bear fruit; already there is a marked reaction against the temporary intoxication that victory produced. In every country village the elementary-school teacher is the centre of progressive thought and action, as the curé is the centre of reaction; the school, however humbly, represents the future, as the church represents the past. In the greater part of rural France the school has conquered the church, not by anti-Catholic propaganda, but simply by dissipating the ignorance and docility which are essential conditions of clerical domination; but there are still many places where the teacher has a hard fight. Where the Church is still strong the position of a teacher sometimes calls almost for heroism; there have been cases in which quite young girls have quietly continued to do their duty in the face of boycotting and petty persecution sometimes reaching the point of a refusal, instigated by the curé, to supply them with food, so that they have had to get it from a neighbouring village. All over France the elementary-school teachers have been the standard-bearers of progress, the pioneers of liberal ideas; the proportion of Socialists among them is large, and they have fought bravely and successfully for the right to combine for the protection of their own interests. In June 1919 they added to the debt of gratitude which France already owed them by refusing to continue the distribution in the schools of literature about German atrocities supplied by the Government for the purpose of nourishing racial hatred.

The separation of Church and State in 1905 made the neutrality of the nation in religious matters complete and deprived the clergy of the authority

that they derived from their position as Government officials; since then the influence of the Church has rapidly declined, especially in the rural districts. Napoleon devised the Concordat in the belief that it would enable him to control the Church and keep the clergy in order; he soon found out his error, and himself declared that the Concordat was the greatest mistake of his career. It is not the business of the State to control the Church, and even if it were the Concordat never enabled it to do so. Under the Restoration and the Second Empire the Church to a great extent controlled the State, and that was the case even in the early years of the Third Republic. When the Church saw that the Third Republic was escaping from its control, it became the moving spirit in every attempt to destroy it, and nearly succeeded in the last decade of the nineteenth century by means of the Dreyfus affair. That awoke the French people to the danger and led to the separation of Church and State. The neutrality of the State in matters of religion is carried to its logical conclusion; no representative of the Government attends a religious ceremony in his official capacity, although, of course, there is nothing to prevent him from going to Mass in his private capacity. Religion has become in France what it ought to be—a purely private concern with which the nation as a whole has nothing to do, since the individuals that compose the nation are not agreed about it; therefore the representatives of the nation have no right to take part in a religious ceremony in its name. France is the only belligerent country where there have been no official religious ceremonies of any kind during the war. French Christians—Catholic and Protestant—and even French Jews have, of course, applied to their respective deities for assistance in

slaughtering their fellow Christians and fellow Jews on the other side of the Rhine—who have returned the compliment—but that is their affair. The French nation as a whole has left God out of a business with which, one would like to believe, he had nothing to do. It did not pray for victory and has not returned thanks for it.

Another achievement of the Third Republic was the Associations Law of 1901, of which Waldeck-Rousseau was the author. It is known in England chiefly by its third chapter, which dealt with the Religious Orders, but it was, in fact, a great measure of liberation, which for the first time established complete freedom of association in France by making it lawful to combine for any legal purpose without authorisation. The only exceptions were the Religious Orders, for which authorisation remains necessary. The methods adopted in dealing with the Religious Orders may be open to question, but there can be no doubt as to the necessity of dealing with them or as to the excellent results of the law. Institutions of the character of Religious Orders, whose members have surrendered their individual liberty, are tied by vows, and are under absolutely despotic control, so that they cannot even go out without leave, cannot be put in the same category as ordinary associations and at least require special regulations. It is, for instance, contrary to public policy to allow very young persons to take life vows the implications of which they often do not understand or to allow persons that profess to have left the world to superintend the education of children who are going to live in it. It is an open question whether people have the right to withdraw themselves from all the duties of citizenship; at any rate, if they do so, they cannot claim to exercise its rights. The mischief of the

Religious Orders is that they always take care to keep one foot in this world; if they wish to get out of it, they should be made to stay out of it entirely unless and until they wish to come back for good. Periodical inspection of all conventual establishments is necessary to ensure their proper administration and to prevent abuses; at every inspection all the inmates should be interviewed in private by the inspector. It is untrue that people are never kept in conventual establishments against their will. Even in those Religious Orders where the vows are only annual and the members have, therefore, the right by the laws of the Church to leave at the expiration of any year, they are often taught that it would be a sin to leave and great moral pressure is brought upon them if they wish to do so. A friend of mine in France had to threaten to send for the police before he could succeed in getting his sister out of a convent which she wanted to leave, although she had not taken life vows and was and has since remained a perfectly good Catholic. There seems to be no reason why Religious Orders should be allowed to hold property; since they profess "holy poverty," let them practise it, as even the Franciscans do not at present, although St. Francis forbade them to own any collective property and ordered them to live by begging. Legislation based on these principles would, in my opinion, have been more effective than the provisions of the Associations Law. Above all, Religious Orders should be forbidden to accept any probationer under the age of thirty; that would soon lead to the disappearance of most of them, for the great majority continue to exist only by the method of "catching 'em young." They have hitherto obtained most of their recruits from their own schools.

Socialism will solve the problem of the Religious

Orders, most of which would not survive the abolition of private property in the means of production, for they are capitalist organisations living on unearned increment and performing no economic service to the community. Socialism would also be the most effective weapon against clerical domination, which depends on the existence of ecclesiastical property under the control of the clergy. In a Socialist community the clergy would either have to work for their living like other people or else be entirely dependent on the laity, which would ultimately mean their control by the laity. This, as an eminent Catholic theologian explained to me many years ago, is one of the reasons why the Church is and always must be opposed to Socialism. But the French Republic had to deal with these problems in existing social conditions, and, although it has made mistakes, its methods have been fairly satisfactory on the whole, considering the difficulties with which it had to contend. It is untrue that the Church in France is or ever has been persecuted by the Republic; separation gave it complete freedom, and the State does not interfere with it in any way. The Bishops are perhaps less free than they were under the Concordat, but, if that be so, it is the fault of the Vatican, against which the Concordat to some extent protected them. If it has not been generally understood in England that it was necessary to destroy clerical domination in France, that is because so little is known in England of French history. It does not come within the scope of this book to give an account of the part played in France in the nineteenth century by the Church and by the "Congregation"—the Religious Orders and the Jesuits in particular. A good idea of it will be obtained from M. Emile Bourgeois's "History of Modern France," of which an excellent English

translation has been published in the Cambridge Historical Series. M. Bourgeois is very far from being a vulgar anti-clerical of the Homais type and his presentation of the facts is scrupulously impartial. I do not mean that he has no bias, for that would be absurd, but he does not allow it to make him invent, conceal, or distort facts, although he sometimes passes judgment on them, as the historian has a right to do. I disagree with many of his judgments and his political point of view is not mine, but I recognise his accuracy.[1] The facts—especially the history of the reigns of Louis XVIII, Charles X, and Napoleon III—will make anybody understand why Gambetta said: "Le Cléricalisme, voilà l'ennemi!"

Unfortunately, since the law for the separation of Church and State was passed in December 1905, Parliament has become more and more impotent. No reform of any importance has been carried since that date, except the income tax, and that, as has been said, was emasculated by the Senate. This is in great measure due to the break-up of the Bloc—a coalition of all the groups of the Left, including the Socialists—with the support of which Waldeck-Rousseau came into power in 1899. The Waldeck-Rousseau and Combes Ministries, whose majority was formed by the Bloc, were unusually long-lived for Ministries of the Third Republic—each of them lasted about three years. It was during those six years that the Associations Law and the ecclesiastical legislation were passed, thanks to the cohesion of the Bloc. At the general election of 1902 the Bloc obtained a large majority in the country, but

[1] This appreciation needs to be qualified as regards the last forty pages of the book, which deal with events after 1899. They are too summary, show signs of having been hastily written and contain several mistakes in matters of fact.

it fell to pieces in 1906 as a result of M. Clemenceau's quarrel with the Socialists, due to his hostility to the Labour movement and his bloody repression of strikes. While M. Clemenceau was Prime Minister from 1906 to 1909 he also disintegrated the Radical Party, which was the largest section of the Bloc. At the general election of 1906 he gave his support to candidates calling themselves Radicals who were as conservative as Sir Charles Dilke declared all French Radicals to be, and, as the genuine Radicals became more and more dissatisfied with his policy and joined with the Socialists against him, he introduced the system of governing with shifting majorities composed now of one combination, now of another, and often including the Centre and even the Right. M. Briand, who succeeded M. Clemenceau as Prime Minister, continued this method and completed the chaos. His conduct in the railway strike of 1910, which he suppressed by mobilising the railwaymen—a measure of doubtful legality—further widened the breach between the bourgeois parties and the Socialists and Trade Unionists, which has never since been bridged over; all subsequent attempts to reconstitute the Bloc have failed. The Chamber is now split up into a score of heterogeneous groups, most of which represent interests rather than principles. They have so little sense or meaning that candidates often present themselves to their constituencies with some vague label, such as "Republican of the Left," and decide only after their election what group they will join. Even the Right, small as it is, is split up into two or three groups between which there is no perceptible difference of opinion or even of method, and it would pass the wit of man to explain the differences between the groups of the Left. There are, for instance,

in addition to the Radical Party, two groups calling themselves respectively "Group of the Radical Left" and "Group of Radical and Socialist-Radical Republicans"; the latter, if I am not mistaken, has seventeen members. Four parties would be enough to represent all the political tendencies in France—the Socialists, the bourgeois Left, the Centre and the Right.[1]

The Radical Party, which has now for many years been the largest political party in France, has a great responsibility for this chaotic system and for the discredit into which Parliament has fallen. Had it taken in hand long ago the reform of the Constitution, it would have been carried by now and French parliamentary institutions might be in a healthier condition. But the Radical Party is no more homogeneous than the other political groups. Its sole bond of union was anti-clericalism and its members differ widely on every other question, so that, since the settlement of the ecclesiastical problems, it has been divided and impotent. An advanced section of the party calling themselves Socialist-Radicals ("Radicaux-Socialistes") made an effort to promote social reforms, but never carried the bulk of the party with them, and they themselves are now as divided as the rest. Even the income tax was, as I have already said, opposed by the Senate, in which there was a large Radical majority, and took years to pass.

[1] The Radicals, the so-called "Socialist Republicans" or Independent Socialists, and the other groups of the bourgeois Left, answer more or less to the English Liberal Party, but two thirds of their members are at least as conservative as most English Tories. The groups of the Centre, of which the Alliance Démocratique is the most important, represent Republican conservative opinion and in most regards are about where the English Tory party was half a century ago. The Right is composed of actual reactionaries—the Catholic Party, the rump of the old Royalists and the Nationalists (ex-Bonapartists and ex-Boulangists).

Yet the old system of direct taxation in France was as lenient to the rich as it was oppressive to the poor; being levied, not on the income of the taxpayer, but on the amount of his rent, it bore no relation to his taxable capacity. M. Caillaux, the author of the Income Tax Bill, instanced in one of his speeches in the Chamber the case of a house at Marseilles where the tenant of a shop on the street making about £400 a year profit paid more in taxation than a financial company earning large profits, which had an office on an upper floor in the same house. Moreover, a man earning his livelihood by the exercise of a trade or profession had to pay an extra tax called the *patente* levied on the rent both of his business premises and of his private residence, with the result that earned incomes were taxed about three times as heavily as unearned ones. Such was the system defended by many politicians calling themselves Radicals because it suited the *petits rentiers* whose votes they wanted. Even when the income tax at last became law, persons engaged in agriculture were exempted from it; this scandalous injustice is only an example of the way in which the urban populations have been and are persistently sacrificed for electioneering reasons. The exemption could not have been carried without the support of Radicals, for the Radicals and Socialists together had a majority in the Chamber which agreed to it. The Radical Party is now almost entirely a "country party," dependent on the rural districts and small towns. The large towns have been captured by the Socialists. The exemption of nearly half the population of France has, of course, enormously diminished the yield of the income tax, which, moreover, is not properly applied except to the salaried classes, whose incomes can be easily ascertained. The declarations of the rich are accepted without question. The whole working of the

French financial and administrative system tends to favour the rich at the expense of the poor to an even greater extent than in most other countries. France is the paradise of the *rentier*—the man living on unearned income derived from rent or interest; and the Radicals, the most advanced politicians of the bourgeoisie, have done nothing to alter this.

One of the reasons of the decadence of the Radical Party is that it has never had the courage to be in opposition. It has always compromised rather than lose any of its members. Individual Radicals take office without consulting the party or even in defiance of its decisions and the party tolerates their conduct. In the present Chamber the Radicals, the Socialists and the "Socialist Republicans," who are merely Radicals under another name, have together a clear majority. After M. Painlevé's resignation in November 1917, they all decided, rightly or wrongly, to refuse their co-operation or support to a Ministry presided over by M. Clemenceau. Nevertheless, when M. Clemenceau formed his Cabinet, Radicals and Independent Socialists accepted office in it and their respective groups acquiesced in their indiscipline. Political parties that act in this way stultify themselves; in fact since that date the Radical Party has fallen into a state of abject servility and is now completely discredited. Had the party had the courage to enforce party discipline, to decide as a party whether or not it would participate in a particular Ministry and to expel any of its members that joined a Ministry without its permission, it might now be reduced in numbers, but it would not be reduced to impotence.

Nothing has done more to undermine the power of the bourgeoisie than the incompetence and

helplessness of the Radicals, which have convinced the proletariat that there is nothing to be hoped for from any bourgeois party. The failure of the Radicals has left the Socialist Party as the only effective political organisation of the Left. Although it is only one-sixth of the Chamber, whereas the Radical Party is nearly one-third, the Socialist Party has an influence out of all proportion to its numbers, due to the fact that it is the only organised political party in France, the only party that has any discipline or any conception of corporate action. The very nature of a party does not seem to be generally understood in France, where one often hears that it is intolerant to expel a man from a party even if he is continually speaking and voting against it. This shows a misapprehension of the nature and scope of tolerance. We ought to tolerate any opinion in the nation, since the alternative is to give those who hold certain opinions the choice between keeping silence and leaving the country, but the toleration of any opinion in a party is an absurdity. A party exists for the purpose of promoting certain opinions, and unless its members agree on all important questions of principle it ceases to be a party. If a man be expelled from a party he can go on expressing his opinions outside it and suffers no injury. The Socialist Party seems to be the only one in France that recognises these truisms. In the midst of political chaos and incoherence it alone stands for something definite.

The system of party government is often criticised in England and is no doubt open to criticism; but those who are inclined to condemn it altogether should first pause and look at France. There the absence of any party system has made personal considerations take precedence of political: that is one of the causes of the decadence of

Parliament. No group ever has a majority in the Chamber, so that a homogeneous Ministry is impossible.[1] Before the war Ministries had for fifteen years been composed of representatives of all the groups of the Left, except the Socialists, who refused to be included. This system, itself the result of the multiplicity of groups, led to their further multiplication. The reason why there are so many groups is that a Deputy whose qualifications would never give him a chance of office if he belonged to a large party becomes "ministrable" by forming a small group and thus commanding a score of votes. But the Ministries are coalitions, not of groups, but of individuals. As in the Radical Party, so in the other groups, Deputies do not consult their colleagues as a rule before accepting an invitation to join a Ministry, or, if they consult them, do not follow their advice if it be unfavourable. When a Ministry resigns, half its members usually join its successor, and it is quite common for a defeated Prime Minister to be succeeded by one of his own colleagues. The possibilities for intrigue afforded by this system are obvious; they are fully exploited. During the war only one Ministry—that of M. Painlevé—was defeated in the Chamber; the others were gradually undermined by subterranean intrigues against them conducted in the lobbies by some of their own members. Each successive Prime Minister during the war, except M. Clemenceau, had been a member of the preceding Cabinet. The "sacred union" or party truce during the war made things worse than ever by

[1] A homogeneous Administration would not be necessary, if Ministers were separately and individually responsible to Parliament and Cabinet government were abolished But so long as ministerial solidarity and Cabinet government exist serious differences of opinion in the Cabinet paralyse its action.

increasing the number of Deputies eligible for office. When Ministries included Socialists, Deputies of the Centre and even of the Right, politics became merely a scramble for office and personal rivalries entirely took the place of political. So long as the majority of French parliamentarians remain unable to resist the temptation of a portfolio, French politics will remain in a state of incoherence.

A terrible weakness of French parliamentarians—and it is not restricted to France—is the fear of responsibility. During the war the majority of the Deputies grumbled against every Government in the lobbies, but only once had the courage to vote against a Government in the Chamber. They complained that the President of the Republic chose Prime Ministers without regard to the wishes of the Chamber and accused him of exercising personal power, but they had only themselves to blame. Until November 1917 the President had no indication of the wishes of the Chamber to guide him in the choice of a Prime Minister, and could but follow his own judgment; and when, in November 1917, he did in fact appoint a Prime Minister in opposition to the expressed wishes of a majority of the Chamber, the Chamber acquiesced in his choice. A Parliament which abdicates in this way has no right to complain if advantage be taken of its docility. There seems to be something demoralising in the atmosphere of a Parliament which produces a lack of moral courage and a fear of responsibility. How often has one heard a Minister say that he was not responsible for a particular policy because he disapproved of it and was overruled by his colleagues; it never seemed to have occurred to him that he could always have resigned and that he ought to have done so if the matter concerned

was one of vital importance. Members of Parliament are disposed to think too much of parliamentary combinations and parliamentary opinion and too little of the country; they become entangled in the parliamentary machine. The French Chamber became, during the war, hopelessly out of touch with the country. On the other hand, it lived in terror of the "Great Press"—the big Parisian morning papers which never really represent French opinion, and did so less than ever during the war. By means of the censorship the Government of the day got the Press under its control and used it to intimidate Parliament; it was a system of government by the Press, perhaps the worst system of government that could be devised. The contempt into which the present Chamber has fallen through its cowardice has reacted on parliamentary institutions as such and enormously increased anti-parliamentarism of both kinds.

Another cause—perhaps the most important of all—of the decline of parliamentarism in France is the corruption which permeates politics. The French themselves exaggerate the extent of corruption; to hear most Frenchmen talk, one would imagine that there was not a single honest politician—that every man of them had his price. But the French are disposed to attribute interested motives to everybody and to doubt the possibility of disinterested conduct—especially in the case of people of whose conduct they disapprove. They usually assume that their political opponents are paid by somebody or are making money somehow out of their nefarious political policy. Thus, M. Clemenceau was for several years believed by the great majority of the French people to be the paid agent of England simply because he did not share the Anglophobia which was then in fashion. So

strong was this conviction, even in official quarters, that when M. Clemenceau visited England during the premiership of Waldeck-Rousseau, the latter had him followed everywhere by agents of the French Secret Police. A similar legend firmly believed by the majority of the bourgeoisie made Jaurès a millionaire; it was finally discredited only after his death, when it was found that he had left his family almost unprovided for, his total fortune amounting to £300 or £400. This tendency to impute interested motives indiscriminately has a certain affinity with the inclination to discover traitors everywhere. Its origin is perhaps partly a certain intolerance due to vanity, which makes people think that nobody can differ from them in good faith; partly an inordinate respect for money, which leads to the belief that nobody can resist the temptation to acquire it.

Although French politicians are less corrupt than many people in France represent them to be, although there are many whose motives are quite disinterested and whose conduct is perfectly clean, nevertheless there is too much corruption in France—more than there is in England. I am not so foolish as to suppose that English politics are free from corruption; they never have been and they have been less so than ever during the war. Nor must one ignore the fact that corruption, like everything else, is more open in France than in England. We are strongly averse from washing our dirty linen in public; the French seem rather to like it than otherwise. Scandals are hushed up in England, they are exposed in France; for this reason England always appears better than it is and France worse. This applies to the whole of life: the French like to recognise facts; we do not—that is what the French really mean when they call us hypocritical.

Yet, when all these considerations have been taken into account, it still remains true that corruption is particularly prevalent in France. Even the exposure of scandals does not check it, for French politicians survive scandals which in England would put an end to their political career. I mean real scandals. Nobody in France regards the fact that a man has been divorced as a scandal, and the suggestion that it would make him unfit to sit in Parliament would be received with universal derision. The French properly regard an incident of that kind as a private affair which does not concern anybody but the person himself. But there are men still occupying a prominent position in French politics in spite of the fact that they were implicated in the Panama affair or some other financial scandal of the same kind. The reason is simple: there is so profound and general a conviction in France that all politicians are corrupt that, when corruption is proved against an individual politician, it is taken almost as a matter of course; it is just what people expected, and they simply shrug their shoulders. For the same reason, it often happens that a reputation for corruption is totally undeserved and that the politicians most generally suspected of having made money out of politics are precisely those whose careers have been perfectly clean. There is a certain French politician who, although he has never been Prime Minister and is not in the first rank, has been a member of several Ministries, who, for some unknown reason, is generally reputed to have made money out of politics throughout his career. He has that reputation even on his own side in politics and the chances are that, if one asked for an example of a corrupt politician, his name would be the first given by nine out of every ten Frenchmen. Yet I am convinced that he is one of the most

honest men in French politics and that his reputation is wholly undeserved; for, as one of his most intimate friends remarked to me, he lives in quite a modest way, spends very little money, and yet he never has a sou to spare. Such mistakes as these are the inevitable result of indiscriminating suspicion; people that suspect everybody invariably become incapable of recognising an honest man when they see one, and end in being taken in by the rogues. That is very much the case of the French people in regard to their politicians; some of those in whom they have had the most confidence have deserved it the least.

Love of money is one of the chief weaknesses of the French, at least of the bourgeois and the peasants, for the workmen on the whole are free from it; it accounts, no doubt, in part for the prevalence of corruption in its grosser and more obvious form—the fonder people are of money the more they will inevitably be tempted by it. But I do not think that this is the chief cause. There is more corruption in France than in England because there are more opportunities for it—it is the inevitable result of the administrative and political system. Such a system would produce corruption in any country and among any people. The enormous amount of patronage which it puts in the hands of Ministers would lead to abuses anywhere. It causes the Government to be regarded primarily as a dispenser of favours which are to be obtained by influence and interest—by the use of a *piston*, as the slang phrase goes. The English Civil Service was corrupt a century ago when vacancies in it were filled by nomination; it was the introduction of open competition that put an end to corruption. In France the system of nomination still exists and produces the results that it formerly produced in

England. Although French Civil servants are very badly paid, the majority of French bourgeois parents prefer a post in the Civil Service for their sons to a trade or profession; the great ambition of a large proportion of Frenchmen is to be a Government official. The number of Government officials is enormous: the Customs, the Octroi, the innumerable forms of petty indirect taxation, some of which are hardly worth the expense of collection, help to make it so. French administration would be much more efficient if the number of Government officials were reduced by half and their salaries doubled, provided that open competition were substituted for nomination, but no Minister will ever propose a change which would reduce the number of places at his disposal. On the other hand, the really important public services are often understaffed; that is the case of the postal service.

The State monopolies add to the patronage at the disposal of Ministers; there are appointments in tobacco and match factories, and there are above all the *bureaux de tabac*—the official tobacco shops, which have the monopoly of selling tobacco retail.[1] Just as in England we are stupid enough to give away to individuals the right to sell drink and thus present them gratuitously with a valuable monopoly, so in France the right to sell tobacco retail is conferred as a favour. Since no training or qualifications are required for it, it is eagerly sought after and gives the largest opportunity for abuse. The most cynical Minister would not dare to give a post in a Government office to a totally illiterate person, but anybody is competent to run a tobacco shop; the prices of all his stock are fixed for him in advance, and he has

[1] For the working of the State monopolies see Chapter VII.

merely to hand over the counter the tobacco, cigars, or cigarettes asked for and take the money. Theoretically a tobacco shop is supposed to be a reward for services of some kind to the State, and in fact it is sometimes given to an incapacitated officer, non-commissioned officer or Government servant, or to his widow. But it would be far more profitable to the State to deal with such cases by adequate pensions and put up to auction the right to sell tobacco either for a term of years or for life; since the number of tobacco shops is limited in proportion to the population, a large revenue would be obtained by that method. There is a certain tobacco shop in Paris which is sublet by its legal holder, who obtains for it a rent of about £3,000 a year; for there is nothing to prevent the holders of the agencies from farming them out, and those that consider it beneath their social position to run them themselves always take that course. It need hardly be said that in awarding tobacco shops Ministers put a very wide and generous interpretation on the term "public services," which often mean political services to a particular Senator or Deputy or to the Minister himself, or even near relationship to one of his friends. In this regard the Third Republic has continued the traditions of the *ancien régime*; the King was the fountain of honour and also of profit, and so is the Government of the Third Republic. It is true that the Ministers of the Republic cannot confer titles, but they have plenty of decorations to give away, and I am not sure that a decoration in France does not give more pleasure to its recipient than a title in England. Certainly decorations are even more sought after in France than titles in England, for there are more of them, and the number of people that can hope to get one is much larger; that is one

of the advantages of democracy. It must be remembered that the holder of a French decoration has the right to wear in his buttonhole a ribbon or rosette indicating that he possesses it. This probably gives a more constant satisfaction than the possession of a title, for if a man enters a restaurant or a railway carriage no stranger knows whether he is a peer or a commoner, whereas, if he should happen to be an officer of the Legion of Honour, everybody in the place knows it by his red rosette. This is no doubt the reason why so much energy and even intrigue are devoted to procuring such humble decorations as the Palmes Académiques, the Mérite Agricole, or the Dragon of Annam; the subject is a perennial one for the French humorists.

Since Ministers are but mortals, nepotism and favouritism are the natural results of a system in which everything goes by favour and the French administration becomes a vast engine of corruption. Places are given, to please friends or conciliate enemies, to reward political supporters or win over political opponents, to recompense personal services or to get rid of importunate suitors. An unfortunate Minister, pestered with applications of every kind from every side, will sometimes yield to importunity what he might refuse to the claims of friendship. For the requests that pour in on him are not all applications for appointments. Every morning his secretaries have to wade through a mass of correspondence asking for favours of every description—usually more or less illegal: for a hint to the *conseil de revision* (recruiting tribunal) that a particular young gentleman is inapt for military service, for a hint to the Public Prosecutor or a *juge d'instruction* that the case against a particular person has nothing in it, for exemption from this, that, or the

other legal obligation. There are not many things that influential connections cannot do in France; when the French say of a man "il a de belles relations," one knows that he is more likely to get on than if he were merely able or industrious. The French judicial system is mediæval: the French system of administration is almost oriental in the arbitrary powers that it gives to Ministers and the way in which influence counts. It is a commonplace in France that laws are never permanently enforced. That is an exaggerated statement, like many others that the French make about themselves, but it is partially true; as a French writer once said, there are too many laws in France for there to be any law. Since most laws are bad in all countries, the failure to enforce them has sometimes its advantages; but, unfortunately, in practice it is usually only influential people who escape the law, which is enforced against those who have no influence.

What, after all, is an unfortunate Minister to do with all the patronage at his disposal? With the best intentions in the world he could not possibly find the most suitable person for every appointment that he has to make: how, for instance, can he possibly decide between the various candidates for a tobacco agency in a remote provincial town? He must depend on recommendations, and very naturally, as any one of us would in the same circumstances, he prefers the recommendations of people that he knows. It is equally natural that he should be ready to give a particularly favourable hearing to his parliamentary colleagues and supporters. So it comes about that one of the chief functions of a French Senator or Deputy is to be the channel through which Ministerial favours flow, and one of his chief preoccupations is to secure a

fair share of those favours for his own constituents. The amount of correspondence with which a French Deputy has to deal is incredible. Every day he receives a huge batch of letters from constituents asking for some service and his re-election may depend on the way in which he answers them. Nor are his constituents content with writing: if the importance of the matter warrants it, or even if it does not, supposing that the constituency is in Paris or within an easy distance, they call upon him at the Chamber. Much of a Deputy's time is taken up in answering letters or receiving visits; some Deputies refuse to do either, but the refusal may easily cost them their seats. If a Deputy has also a profession or a business, he has very little time left for his real parliamentary duties; that is, perhaps, one of the reasons why the Chamber often does not give to important matters the serious attention that they deserve. It must not be supposed that all Deputies like this system; on the contrary, it is probable that the majority of them would be glad to be relieved from the burden of satisfying the demands for places and favours, and I have known men who have abandoned political life in disgust at it. After all, the task is an ungrateful one; for every person that a Deputy satisfies by getting him a place he offends fifty who wanted it and did not get it. The system vitiates the whole political atmosphere; electors often vote for a Deputy less for his political principles and programme than for what they hope to get out of him through his relations with those in power. It is a high tribute to the independence and public spirit of the French proletariat that the Socialists, who are, of course, the worst possible Deputies to get anything out of, have so large a representation in the Chamber. It is naturally in the rural districts, where the Deputies come into

much closer individual contact with their constituents, that self-interest enters most into an election. To the Deputies themselves the system that makes them channels for the distribution of favours is demoralising. They know that their re-election depends more on the favours that they can obtain for their constituents than on their action in Parliament—that a liberal distribution of places and decorations covers a multitude of political sins. Nor is it only individual favours that they can obtain for their constituents. The powerlessness of the local authorities and the necessity of obtaining the authorisation of the Government for every local improvement gives further opportunities for the exercise of the Deputy's influence. A rural district has often had to wait for years for a new bridge or a new road that was badly needed merely because its Deputy was unfavourably regarded by the Government. On the principle of "do ut des," the Government uses the favours which it grants to Senators and Deputies as a means of bringing pressure on them; to oppose the Government is to lose one's chance of being useful to one's constituency and therefore to damage one's chance of re-election. One means of influencing members of Parliament is fortunately forbidden by law: it is illegal for a Senator or Deputy to be given a decoration. But this prohibition was suspended by Parliament early in the war on the pretext of decorating Deputies on active service for their military exploits. Immediately a shower of decorations descended on the Chamber, and every Deputy that had served in a provincial Intendance or found the slightest excuse for putting on a uniform appeared with the Legion of Honour in his buttonhole, provided, of course, that he was a faithful supporter of the Government.

There are, however, corrupting and demoralising influences in Parliament even more important than those that have been mentioned, and even more serious in their effects. They are not peculiar to France, for they are the necessary outcome of existing social conditions, but they are perhaps more obvious in France than elsewhere. The Socialist workman who doubts whether Socialism will ever triumph by Parliamentary methods has one cogent and, to my mind, almost unanswerable argument: the effect of a capitalist Parliament on its members, and in particular on Socialist and Labour representatives. Intense bitterness has been caused in the French proletariat by the way in which certain politicians of great ability have used Socialism as a ladder by which to climb into eminence, only to kick it down when it has served its purpose. From the point of view of self-interest it is an obvious disadvantage to an able man to be a Socialist, for it means that he can never hope to hold office and that the prizes of politics are denied to him. All men are not so disinterested as Jaurès, who would have been Prime Minister of France years before his death had he remained what he was at the beginning of his career—a Republican of the Left Centre—or even if his evolution towards the Left had stopped short at Radicalism. M. Millerand, M. Briand, and M. Viviani were all Socialists and all abandoned Socialism to become Ministers. M. Briand had been in Parliament only four years when he became Minister of Public Instruction and Public Worship in M. Clemenceau's first Cabinet, and he was suppressing a railway strike amid the applause of all the capitalists and reactionaries in France only five or six years after his violent advocacy of the general strike as a revolutionary method. I cannot assert that MM.

Millerand, Briand, and Viviani were insincere or influenced solely by self-interest—that is a matter for their own consciences—but undoubtedly a conversion that is profitable to the convert is open to grave suspicion; the presumption in such a case is on the side of insincerity, just as it is on the side of sincerity when the convert loses, or at least does not gain, by his conversion. There can be no doubt that every French Socialist politician that has abandoned Socialism has profited by the change exceedingly, both financially and otherwise. These desertions have perhaps done as much as anything to promote anti-parliamentarism among the French proletariat. But such cases are happily in a minority; on the majority the demoralising influence of the parliamentary environment is more subtle and less obvious.

A large proportion—indeed the majority—of French Deputies are men in a very modest financial position—country lawyers, country doctors, veterinary surgeons, and so on. When they are elected they come up from their province to Paris and find themselves with an income of £600 a year. It is not a large income, especially in Paris, but it is often larger than they have ever had before, and its possibilities seem to a man accustomed to the simple life and modest expenditure of a country town much greater than they actually are. If the newly-elected Deputy is married, he sometimes leaves his wife behind in order to reduce expenses, and for a time Madame Durand enjoys the new sensation of shining among her friends and acquaintances as Madame la Deputé. But sooner or later she hankers after Paris; when that happens she naturally gets her way in accordance with the ancient privilege of her sex. Once in Paris she is only too likely to develop social ambitions, and

social ambitions cost money. She is invited to receptions at Ministries and the Elysée and perhaps at an Embassy or two, and she naturally wants to be as well dressed as the Parisian women whom she meets there. She probably does not succeed in that ambition, for it is very difficult to be as well dressed as a Parisian woman, but it costs just as much money as if she did succeed. The Deputy, for his part, becomes accustomed to the life of Paris, acquires perhaps a taste for good dinners in more or less expensive restaurants, mixes in the society of men that spend a good deal of money, and in general becomes a very different person in his habits and tastes from what he was before. He may even think it necessary or desirable to acquire a "petite amie," "just like a reactionary," as the Radical Deputy says in "Le Roi," and that may turn out to be a very expensive luxury, especially if the lady professes to love him for himself. With all this an income of £600 a year in Paris soon becomes inadequate, and, besides, the income is precarious; it depends on securing re-election and is guaranteed for only four years. The prospect of being possibly obliged to return to a very modest situation in a country town or village is not pleasing when one has become accustomed to the life of Paris. So the Deputy sees that he must make money—a Deputy can always make money, and by means in themselves perfectly legitimate according to all ordinary standards. Direct and vulgar bribery is comparatively rare; there are, of course, Deputies that accept a sum of money or some other direct bribe for promoting in Parliament the interests of an individual corporation by supporting or opposing a particular measure or in some other way, but such cases are exceptional. As a rule, the financial

interests proceed more cautiously and indirectly. A barrister is offered briefs or the position of standing counsel to some great financial or industrial company. Of course, no conditions are attached to the offer—that would be a very clumsy way of going about the matter—but, if a measure affecting the company's interest happens to come before the Chamber, it is probable that the Deputy in question will act in accordance with those interests, and, if he be an influential man, his action may be very effective. There are all sorts of ways in which a Deputy may be useful to a commercial concern; it may be a question of obtaining a concession or some other favour from the Government. A Deputy that is not a barrister may be put on a board of directors or otherwise interested in a perfectly honourable way. A journalist—and there are many journalists in the Chamber—may be given a good appointment on a big Parisian paper, or capital may be found for him to start a paper for himself. The financial interests have innumerable methods of getting Deputies under their influence, and they use them all. The Panama affair was not exceptional; it differed from many others of the same kind only in its magnitude and in the consequent publicity given to it. An investigation of some of the others would give interesting results. We do not yet know, for instance, all the connections in Parliament and the Press of the N'Goko Sanga enterprise, although we know that a leading member of the staff of a great Parisian paper, who is now in a still more prominent position, was considerably interested in it. The temptation to make money directly or indirectly out of politics is very great, and it is not surprising that many politicians succumb to it, since most of the means appear quite consistent with honourable conduct. It is

probable that many politicians, when they take the first step, do not realise in what a coil they are involving themselves. Of course there are means of making money in politics, other than that of accepting bribes, which nobody would call legitimate. One has heard of Ministers who gambled on the Stock Exchange on their official information, and there is a lady in Paris who has, rightly or wrongly, the reputation of acting as intermediary in these little transactions. What is certain in any case is that there have been and are too many men in French politics who, when they leave political life, are much richer than they were when they entered it.

I confess that I see no remedy for this evil, which is the inevitable result of capitalist conditions. It has been proposed to make it illegal for members of Parliament to be directors of companies and even to follow certain occupations; that might diminish the evil, it would not do away with it. So long as the financial and capitalist interest exists it will find ways of influencing politicians. Certainly some of the more open abuses might be suppressed in the interest of public decency; it is scandalous that a Cabinet Minister should be allowed to hold large interests in concerns dealing with the State. But such measures would only be palliatives. High Finance has France in its grip; it is the power behind the Throne, ubiquitous and omnipotent; and, although it is stronger in France than elsewhere, for reasons that have been mentioned,[1] it is a pernicious influence in every country. The whole development of the modern capitalist system tends to increase the power of finance, and there is only one way of escape from the domination of the financial interests—Socialism. Democracy is not

[1] See page 72.

the cause of corruption; it has not yet been realised even in the countries called democratic, least of all in France. It is not a question of regime: the Third Republic is no more corrupt than the regimes that preceded it, and if corruption has extended its scope to some degree, that is the result of the increased power of Finance and has nothing to do with political conditions. It is idle to tell the workmen that they can get all they want if they choose to capture Parliament; they know very well that it is not true, since Parliament will always be captured by the financial interests. That is the reason of the anti-parliamentarism of the Russian revolution, which our Press calls undemocratic because it is trying to make democracy possible.

In France, as I have said, there are many members of Parliament that have never made, and never will make, a penny out of politics directly or indirectly. That is true of the great majority of the Socialist Deputies; by common consent the Socialist Party is recognised as the cleanest party in French politics. The Socialist Deputies are drawn from all classes of society—the bourgeoisie, the peasantry, and the proletariat—and the reason why they compare so favourably as a whole with the other parties is no doubt that on the one hand they have definite principles, and on the other they cannot join in the scramble for portfolios. When the Socialist Party was led by the war to depart from its rule of not participating in a bourgeois Ministry, the effects on the party were disastrous; some of the Socialist Deputies have now ceased to be Socialists in anything but name. But happily the party has returned to its principles, and the Social-Patriots, if they are re-elected at all, will not be re-elected by Socialist votes. But,

although the Socialist Party is exceptionally free from corruption, although the Deputies of proletarian origin are as a body less amenable to corrupting influences than the bourgeois, nevertheless all alike undergo to some extent the demoralising influence of Parliament. A workman that becomes a Deputy sooner or later becomes a bourgeois and out of touch with his own class. At present the French Socialist Deputies as a whole are painfully out of touch with the rank and file of the party—the war is partly responsible for the fact, which intensifies the discredit of Parliament. Whenever the social revolution comes in France, it will not be a parliamentary revolution; it will take the form that it is taking in all the European countries where it has come already, with such modifications as would naturally arise from French conditions. By timely reforms the parliamentary system might have been saved, but the bourgeoisie, which has ruled France during the nineteenth century, has been as blind and conservative as was the noblesse in the eighteenth century, and is likely to pay the same penalty. It seems at last disposed to make concessions—the Government of M. Clemenceau introduced a legal eight-hour day—but it is probable that these concessions made at the eleventh hour will produce the same effect as the concessions of Louis XVI. I am disposed to think, as I have already said, that it is too late to save the parliamentary system or the present regime; France is at the cross-roads—one leads to revolution and the other to reaction, and nobody can yet say which she will take.

If she chooses the path that leads to revolution, the reactionaries will have a large responsibility for the choice. It has been said that France is the country of revivals and reconstitutions; that is only

another way of saying that she is the country of reactions, or has been in the past. That has been one of the greatest weaknesses of France since the Revolution—that nothing seems to have been definitely acquired; French history during the nineteenth century was a series of reactions. In England reforms are often violently opposed, but when they are once passed even the great majority of their opponents accept them. That is to say, there are no reactionaries in the true sense of the term in England, or they are a negligible quantity—there is the *Morning Post*, of course, but its reactionary opinions are purely literary and it is so amusing that one would be sorry to lose it. In France there is an organised political party—the Action Française—which proposes to return to the *ancien régime;* a parallel would be a serious Jacobite party in England. It is true that the Action Française is a small minority, that it has no following in the peasantry or the proletariat, but it is a considerable force in the bourgeoisie, it has plenty of money at its disposal, and each successive Government during the war has thought it worth while to conciliate it. It played a large part in bringing M. Clemenceau into power and in keeping him there. When M. Painlevé was Prime Minister in 1917, clear evidence was obtained of seditious action in the army on the part of the Action Française, and M. Painlevé was induced by M. Poincaré to refrain from prosecuting. I mention these facts to show that the Action Française, absurd as its programme seems, is not at all a negligible quantity; there is actually a considerable number of people in France that want to go back to the political, social, and economic conditions of the eighteenth century. Although the Third Republic has existed for nearly half a century, it is

not yet accepted by the whole of the French people. Mr. Chesterton, if I am not mistaken, has suggested somewhere that the reason of this is that the Republic is a party, but, if that be true, it is only because the Republic has not been universally accepted—Mr. Chesterton has mistaken an effect for a cause. In the same sense, every preceding regime since the Revolution has been a party, for the form of government has been constantly in dispute. So long as there is in any country a body of men that refuse to accept the existing form of government, the supporters of the regime must defend it against them. In fact the Third Republic has been far more tolerant of the Royalists than was the British Government of the Jacobites, so long as the latter were an effective force, and I doubt very much whether in England at this moment a party whose avowed object it was to overthrow the Monarchy, by force if necessary, would be allowed openly to preach and even to organise sedition as the Action Française is.

These sterile controversies about the form of government have been a great hindrance to progress in France and have seriously handicapped the country in every way. It is only just to say that they are to some degree responsible for the barren record of the Third Republic in regard to reforms. The Boulangist movement and the Dreyfus affair forced Republicans for years to be on their defence; the task of saving what was acquired absorbed all their energies and prevented them from undertaking reforms. That is what I mean by saying that, if revolution comes, the reactionaries will have a large responsibility for it. They have indeed helped to discredit the present regime, but it is at least possible that it is not they who will benefit by the discredit. On the contrary, they may be the

greatest sufferers, for they all belong to the capitalist class, and in that case they will deserve no pity. The excessive preoccupation of the French with forms of government is no doubt partly a result of Etatisme—of the tendency to regard the State as an omnipotent Providence dispensing good and evil. The Government is held responsible for everything, it "fills the butchers' shops with big blue flies," or clears them of flies, as the case may be. When things go well, the Government of the day or the regime is praised without discrimination; it is blamed with equal lack of discrimination when things go badly. So the Neapolitan fisherman puts flowers and candles before the image of his favourite saint when the haul is good and beats the image or puts it in the well when the haul is bad. It is probable that the French Government is often no more responsible than the saint for vicissitudes of fortune.

These, I believe, are the main factors in the present unrest in France and in the discredit into which parliamentary institutions and the bourgeois republican regime have fallen. Some of them are a legacy from the Revolution, as I shall try to show in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS OF THE REVOLUTION

"Since the *Temps* does me the honour of attaching some importance to my opinion, I hasten to inform it, without hoping that my avowal will disarm it, that I remain the fierce enemy of the Constitution of the year VIII, so carefully preserved by all my friends that have been in power during the last thirty years. Not only do I stand firm for decentralisation, but my ideal of government is Federalism, so far am I from meriting the reproach of Jacobinism which the *Temps* hurls at random at all that are not of its sect. The ancient division into provinces, which was the product of history, was destroyed by the Revolution in a moment of anger in order to break the resistance to the new order of the combined forces of the old. It came about that in hastening the realisation of their system of *autoritaire* liberation the Jacobins, to use the term employed by the *Temps*, chiefly succeeded in forging the instruments of Napoleonic despotism. Nevertheless the institutions of 1793 were remarkably liberal in comparison with those of the year VIII. Since then we have proclaimed the Republic, but we have not made it."—GEORGES CLEMENCEAU (*L'Aurore*, July 31, 1903.)

THE French Revolution of the eighteenth century had a greater influence on the civilised world than any movement since the Renaissance, the influence of which was perhaps less permanent than that of the Revolution, for it was unhappily arrested by the Reformation and the consequent counter-reformation. The effects of the Revolution extended far beyond the borders of France; no civilised country was unaffected by it. Indeed it transformed the world: to it we owe our habits of

thought, our ideas of humanitarianism, tolerance, and freedom—all, in fact, that makes the modern world what it is on the intellectual side. If France had never achieved anything but the Revolution the world would owe her a debt of gratitude which can never be repaid. The service that France rendered to the world was rendered at a terrible cost to herself. Nevertheless the Revolution made in France profound changes for the better—political, social, and economic—which the series of reactions which succeeded it were unable to obliterate, although they seriously impaired many of them. France has not yet regained all that she lost during the nineteenth century of what the Revolution had given her. The intellectual France of the eighteenth century was, on the whole, wider and more generous in its sympathies than the France of the nineteenth century—certainly, though intensely French, more international, even cosmopolitan. "The France of Voltaire and of Montesquieu—that is the great, the true France," said Anatole France in London in December 1913. That France survived in the nineteenth century in individuals and even in parties, but it was not the dominant France, which became in most respects one of the most conservative countries of the civilised world. The reactions of the nineteenth century were, of course, the consequences of the mistakes and extravagances of the Revolution, but those mistakes and extravagances were themselves almost entirely the result of external interference with the Revolution. The Holy Alliance was chiefly responsible for all that was bad in the Revolution, for the sufferings which it brought on France, and for the reactions which unsettled the country and hindered its progress during the nineteenth century. No Englishman can remember without shame the

part that England, in spite of the generous and far-seeing statesmanship of Charles James Fox, played in the infamous attack on the French Revolution; has any rhetoric been quite so mischievous as that of Burke? We paid for our criminal folly by twenty years of war to rid the world of the Napoleonic menace which we ourselves had created. Had the Revolution been left alone, there would have been no Reign of Terror, its development would have been quite other than it was, France would never have become an aggressive military Power, and French history of the nineteenth century would have been very different from what it has been. The perversion of the Revolution by the monarchies of Europe aided by renegade French aristocrats is one of the greatest tragedies of history. It is only a very poor consolation that the whole of Europe has suffered for it—for most of the European wars during the nineteenth century can ultimately be traced to the policy of the Holy Alliance—and that the French noblesse has paid for its base egotism and treachery by political annihilation. It should never be forgotten that many of the mistakes of France during the nineteenth century, many of her existing weaknesses, are the result of the persecution to which she was subjected and which checked and perverted her normal development.

Why, for instance, did the Revolution, which began with international aspirations and enthusiasm for the brotherhood of man, end in a narrow and exclusive Nationalism and in aggressive militarism which made France a danger to Europe? Chiefly because of foreign interference. It is true that there were two main intellectual influences in the Revolution—that of Voltaire and that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau; the former was the rationalist

influence, the latter the religious. The Jacobins were true disciples of Jean-Jacques. The most discerning picture in literature of the Jacobin character is that given by Anatole France in "Les Dieux ont soif." The Jacobin was not at all the bloodthirsty ruffian that he is usually represented to have been; he was as a rule a person of austere life, rigid morality, and intense religious fervour, whose aim was to make everybody good and moral—the very type of the religious fanatic. His counterpart in history is the inquisitor who burned people to save their souls and to protect others from error; both were animated with the best possible intentions. The great fault of the Jacobin was that he was too moral. Robespierre was a Puritan and, like the Puritans of the seventeenth century, tried to enforce his own ideas of religion and morality. He guillotined atheists and prostitutes as well as aristocrats, and regarded disbelief in God as a mark of a bad citizen. The Jacobins, in fact, were inverted Catholics, whose intolerance was the logical outcome of their belief in authority. But it may be doubted whether they would ever have come to the top but for the fear of foreign invasion. Fear was the cause of the Terror, which was intelligible in the circumstances. France stood alone, with all the Great Powers of Europe against her; the heroism of the armies of the Republic, ill-equipped and undisciplined, had almost by a miracle repelled the invaders, but the danger was great. And Frenchmen were in the pay of the enemy, working against France abroad and spying at home. It is not surprising that every aristocrat was presumed to be a traitor. Have we not seen the same spirit manifest itself with much less excuse during the recent war in every belligerent country? If "Pro-Germans" and "Pacifists" have not been guillo-

tined in England, that is not the fault of the public; they have been tarred and feathered in the United States. Patriotism and fear produce much the same results in the twentieth as in the eighteenth century.

The rise of Napoleon, the French wars of conquest, the aggressive military spirit which laid hold of the French people, had as their sole cause the foreign attacks on the Revolution. No war in history was ever so purely defensive as was the war of the Revolution on the part of France, but, like all defensive wars, it degenerated into a war of aggression. I do not think that there is an example in history of a nation which, having been forced to go to war in self-defence, has been content to stop at self-defence and to end the war when it had repelled the attack. Having once tasted blood, it has always become aggressive in its turn and wanted to continue until it had completely crushed its enemy. And the chances are that victory creates a desire for further conquests; no nation has ever yet abstained from abusing a victory or prevented the wine of victory from going to its head. Unfortunately, the Jacobin spirit did not die with Robespierre, nor did French militarism perish with Napoleon. Both have had a deplorable influence on France during the nineteenth century, and the persistence of militarism, at any rate, was again the fault of the Holy Alliance. Had we left the French people to deal with Napoleon after Waterloo, he might have fared ill at their hands. If he had not lost his throne he would have been obliged to make great concessions; France would, sooner or later, have returned to the Republic, and it would probably have lasted to this day. But we forced on France in 1815 a Royal family that she had repudiated and a form of government that she de-

tested. We made a martyr of the discredited Emperor and by prolonging the Napoleonic legend ultimately led to the Second Empire, which, by its cheap imitation of Napoleon's aggressive policy, brought France to Sedan. It is to a great extent our fault—the fault of England, Prussia, Austria, and Russia—that France remained during the nineteenth century, except under the Monarchy of July, a Chauvinist and aggressive Power, that she was distracted and retarded by successive reactions and changes of regime. And when at last, thanks to the secularisation of the schools and to the influence of Socialism, and of Jaurès in particular, the Chauvinists were defeated at the end of the nineteenth century, Russia and England worked together only too successfully to give them back their influence. Since 1899 the French reactionaries, powerless to act openly, have influenced the foreign and even the internal policy of France through the intermediary of the Government of the Tsar, and since 1904 the British Foreign Office has consistently backed the French politicians that promoted a Chauvinist and bellicose policy and opposed the others. M. Delcassé, who nearly dragged France and Europe into war in 1905, was the hero of the British Foreign Office and of most of the British Press and the faithful servant of Edward VII. M. Rouvier and M. Caillaux, who saved France and Europe from war, were pursued with undying hatred as enemies of England. Certainly the French people is to blame for having allowed its rulers to keep it in ignorance of the obligations to which they had committed it and for having disinterested itself in foreign affairs, but it is none the less true that it has been cruelly deceived and that the misfortunes of France since the Revolution have

been principally due to foreign interference and foreign control of French policy.

Nevertheless, the Revolution made mistakes which were not due to foreign interference, but rather to the affection of the Revolutionaries, and of the Jacobins in particular, for theories deduced by the *a priori* method from first principles, which they rigidly applied without considering whether the conditions were suitable. The Declaration of the Rights of Man is itself an example of this method. Its very first statement—that all men are born free and equal—is evidently untrue, and many of the other assertions which it puts forth as self-evident truths are far from being indisputable; its authors were unable to rid themselves of the passion for dogma. The chief causes of the Revolution, as of all other great movements in history, were economic, but it was a political rather than a social revolution. It did nothing for the proletariat, to whom its success was in a large measure due, and the attempt of a few men to probe economic evils to their roots was promptly suppressed. The French Revolution was essentially a bourgeois revolution. Holding as they did that the right of private property was sacred and inviolate, the Revolutionaries aimed at extending it to as many people as possible—at creating the largest possible number of bourgeois—but, as it is impossible for everybody to have private property, the case of the propertyless became worse than ever, and the Revolution, in fact, helped the development of modern industrial capitalism. In so far as it was a social revolution it merely substituted the bourgeoisie for the noblesse as the governing class. From the Revolution issued the *grand bourgeois* families, whose fortunes originated for the most part in the purchase of *biens nationaux* (confiscated ecclesiastic

property), many of whom forgot their origins and became pillars of reaction. Some obtained titles from Louis-Philippe, Napoleon III, or even the Pope. One of the leading Royalist Senators at the present moment is a gentleman the founder of whose family had a special taste for desecrating churches and acquired a considerable fortune by plundering châteaux and by fortunate purchases of ecclesiastical property which his pious Catholic descendant still enjoys. When the latter entertains at his château in the Vendée the neighbouring families of the old noblesse, most of them recognise their own arms on the silver used at table.

The great economic change effected by the Revolution was, of course, in regard to land tenure. It gave prosperity to the peasants, who became the owners of the land that they tilled, and the law obliging an owner of land to divide it equally among his children at his death has prevented land from again becoming concentrated in the hands of a few individuals. That this system has its advantages nobody would deny—it was an immense advance on the land system of the old regime which still exists in England, and for a long time it worked well. But it has also, as we shall see, had great disadvantages, both material and moral, and modern conditions are rapidly making it impossible. It would be unreasonable to blame the Revolution for not having gone further than it did in the direction of economic change. The conditions in France at the end of the eighteenth century were not yet ripe for Socialism, if Karl Marx was right in thinking that industrial capitalism is a necessary stage in economic development. It is true that Russia is now trying the experiment of passing directly from feudalism to Socialism, but it remains

to be seen whether the experiment will succeed, and if it does, it will be because the Russians have behind them a century's experience of industrialism in other countries. At the end of the eighteenth century modern Socialism was still impossible; the French Revolution went as far as possible in the circumstances. Its work was necessarily incomplete and requires to be completed, but, whatever its mistakes, it was the source and inspiration of all that is best in modern France. One has only to study the conditions of the old regime to realise how much injustice and oppression, how much misery and suffering, the Revolution swept away. If it did not thoroughly achieve Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, these three words still express the ideal of all Socialists and liberals and sum up all their aims.

The greatest mistake of the Revolution was a political one—the abolition of the old French provinces and the centralisation of government and administration. The process of centralisation had already begun under Louis XIV, but it was carried much further by the Revolution, and Napoleon completed it, for it exactly suited his ideal of government; a despotic ruler is always jealous of local liberties. The Jacobins, who were on the side of authority against liberty, were also naturally and logically partisans of centralisation, but there can be no doubt that it was the revolt of the Vendée that gave force to the ideal of "The Republic One and Indivisible" and led to the conviction that that ideal could be realised only by suppressing all provincial autonomy. The centralisers did their work thoroughly. They divided France into departments, mostly named after rivers or mountains, the areas of which were decided arbitrarily without regard to local interests or local

peculiarities. They deliberately fixed the boundaries of the departments in such a way as to prevent them from coinciding with those of the ancient provinces; for instance, the department of the Yonne is composed of a piece of Champagne and a piece of Burgundy. It would be impossible to restore the provinces without altering the boundaries of some departments, for there is not a single group of departments which is exactly coterminous with an ancient province. The aim was to stamp out all local differences and bring about uniformity throughout the whole of France. The attempt was, happily, a failure. As I have already said, legally and administratively the provinces no longer exist, but they still exist for all other purposes. A Frenchman may forget in what department he was born; he never forgets his native province. He is a Provençal, an Auvergnat, a Tourangeot, a Burgundian, a Breton, a Norman, a Fleming, or a Lorrainer before he is a Frenchman, and it makes all the difference in the world which he is, for the provincial characteristics and idiosyncrasies are still as marked as ever and the provincial names represent different types and even different races. There is more difference, for instance, between a Provençal and a Lorrainer or a French Fleming than there is between either and the inhabitants of the adjoining foreign countries. Nature has been too strong for the centralisers. The meaningless departments, which represent nothing, exist only for legal and administrative purposes; it never has been and never will be possible to galvanise them into real life or to force the people to accept them. Ask a Frenchman where he comes from and he will never reply "Seine-Inférieure" or "Haute-Marne"; he will say "Normandy" or "Champagne." The village

to which a Frenchman is born is his "pays," and his real "patrie" is his province. ...strongest patriotism in France is regional ...tism, because it is the only natural patriotism. ...lder than the French Monarchy, it has sur... the Revolution and it will never be stamped ...

...ystical patriotism—devotion to France conceived as a lady with a Greek profile wearing a helmet or a cap of Liberty, whose bust is to be found in every *mairie*—dates from the Revolution and was its creation. Allegiance to the sovereign took its place under the *ancien régime;* Joan d'Arc was inspired, not by devotion to France, but by loyalty to her liege lord, who so basely deserted her. Nobody before the Revolution would have talked of France, as M. Viviani does, as a "moral person"; the habit of personifying a nation, which has been so fruitful a source of misconceptions and false notions, is a modern vice. When the sovereign disappeared in France it was thought necessary to find a substitute for him to offer to popular worship and the "moral person" was invented. It is, I think, because regional patriotism is the natural patriotism for Frenchmen and the other is artificial that the latter has always taken the form of Chauvinism. For it is impossible to deny that Chauvinism is essentially French and is very difficult to distinguish from French patriotism, which is not a natural love of country but a sort of religious cult of an ideal France which ministers to national vanity. And Nationalism is itself a product of the Revolution, which was forced into it by attacks from without. The conquests of Napoleon naturally strengthened Nationalist and Chauvinist sentiment—they had exactly the same effect on France as had the victories over Austria,

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bellicose nation. The defeat of 1871 would have been a wholesome lesson had the terms of peace been just and reasonable, but once more the victors abused their victory, with the inevitable result. Thus was Chauvinism nourished and kept alive in a naturally warlike people—for the French are and always have been born soldiers. When at last the great majority of the French people abandoned the "Revanche" and the Chauvinist party was defeated by the influences that have been mentioned, the Chauvinist propaganda was driven under ground, so to speak, and having by subterranean methods. with help from outside France, undermined the forces of peace and Internationalism, came out once more into the open in 1912 and for two years made a campaign of provocation. Chauvinism triumphed in January 1913 when M. Raymond Poincaré was elected President of the Republic by the votes of all the reactionaries and militarists in order to carry on a spirited foreign policy ("une politique fière"). The triumph was facilitated by the curious insularity of the French, which had led them to

concentrate all their attention on internal affairs and to be indifferent to foreign politics. M. Emile Combes, who is in many ways a typical Frenchman, is a striking example of that insularity. When he was Prime Minister he used at Cabinet Councils, when a question of foreign policy came up, to tell his Foreign Minister, M. Delcassé, to settle it with the President of the Republic (M. Loubet); he did not consider foreign affairs to be of sufficient importance to occupy the time of the Cabinet. Even Jaurès, although from the first he recognised the danger of the Russian Alliance and of the Moroccan adventure, allowed himself to be immersed in the controversy about Proportional Representation at a moment when Chauvinism was again raising its head.

One of the strongest reasons for believing that modern French patriotism is artificial and not natural to Frenchmen is the fact that so many great French writers have been anti-patriotic in the sense of being opposed to mystical patriotism. Therein they only followed Voltaire: "Candide" is by implication the most scathing satire on patriotism and nationalism that has ever been written; it is inspired by pure internationalism. A whole group of writers under the Third Republic revived the tradition of the "true France" and of the founders of the Revolution: they include such names as Guy de Maupassant, Octave Mirbeau, and the greatest of all French writers since Voltaire—Anatole France. Mirbeau's best novel, "Le Calvaire," contains an indictment of patriotism all the more effective since it leaves the reader to draw the conclusions; "Sébastien Roch" and others of his books have the same tendency. Mirbeau hated the bourgeoisie—its religion, its morality, and its ideals—with all his soul. Anatole France destroys

patriotism with ridicule; his delicate irony is more dangerous than Mirbeau's direct attacks. Writer after writer has exposed the brutality and injustice of the military system and the evils of conscription, in such books as Lucien Descaves' "Sous-offs" and the works of the great ironist, Georges Courteline. Infinite pathos underlies the humorous irony of "Le Train de 8 h. 47," and "Les Gaietés des l'Escadron," to mention two among Courteline's many studies of life in military service. No other country has produced such a crop of anti-patriotic writers of great distinction as France; the reason can only be that mystical patriotism is alien from the rationalist, realist French nature, and has been imposed upon it by circumstances. At present the artificial mystical patriotism exists side by side with the natural regional patriotism, but the former is transitory, the latter eternal.

It is a true instinct that is making some Frenchmen turn to decentralisation as an alternative to the present parliamentary system. Experience has shown that democracy is impossible in large countries; it can be made possible not only in France but everywhere else only by decentralisation—if you like, by "restoring the heptarchy." Decentralisation is also essential to internationalism. Some of us thought once—I did myself—that the formation of large empires was a step towards internationalism. That was a delusion. They merely intensify and exaggerate national rivalries and disputes and have produced the most frightful war that the world has ever known. Moreover, they tend to produce a dull uniformity, to suppress local variety, and they are unfavourable to art and literature, which have almost always flourished most in small communities. The greatest period of Italian

art was the period when Italy was split up into innumerable small States hardly extending beyond the limits of a town; Italy is now one of the least artistic countries in the world. France seems to be an exception to this rule, because the whole intellectual and artistic life of the country has been concentrated in Paris, which is to France what no other capital is to a country. But already there are signs of intellectual decentralisation in France; Paris no longer has the influence that it once had over the country. Uniformity is not necessary to unity; what is needed is unity in diversity, not merely in the nation but in the whole civilised world—an internationalism based on infinite local variety.

The special need of decentralisation in France has been recognised by Frenchmen of all shades of opinion. The Boulangist movement was in the first place principally a movement in favour of decentralisation; it was for that reason that many Radicals, including M. Clemenceau, rallied to the support of General Boulanger until he was bought by the Royalists and the movement became a plot against the Republic. This perversion of the Boulangist movement discredited the demand for decentralisation, and it became—quite illogically—the mark of a true Republican to oppose it. The fact that the Action Française is in favour of decentralisation merely because the provinces existed under the *ancien régime* still causes a large number—perhaps the majority—of Republicans to regard all decentralising proposals with suspicion. The decentralisation advocated by the Action Française would, of course, be the opposite of democratic; democratic decentralisation is quite a different matter. There is actually before Parliament a scheme of decentralisation, the author of which is

M. Jean Hennessy, Deputy for the Charente, who began his political career as a Bonapartist, but is now a staunch Republican with strong leanings towards Socialism. M. Hennessy proposes the creation of what, in order to disarm prejudice, he calls "regional" legislative assemblies; each "region" would include several of the existing departments and, I imagine, would be as nearly as possible identical with an ancient province. He further proposes that the members of the regional assemblies should be elected on a system of proportional representation and should be the representatives, not of localities, but of occupations. All the electors would be grouped according to their trade, calling, or profession, and each group would be represented proportionately to its numbers; there would be a special group composed of all that did not come under one of the other categories. This system, which resembles that of the Trade Union Congress, means, in fact, the substitution of economic for political methods of social organisation. In any case, it is important that the members of a regional or any other elected assembly should be the delegates, not merely the representatives, of their electors. What has to be got rid of is the "representative system" under which a member of Parliament during his term of office is free from all control on the part of his electors. One method of exercising popular control of elected delegates is the referendum, which exists in Switzerland, but I should prefer that which has been adopted by the Russian Socialist Republic, which gives the electors the power to withdraw a delegate in certain conditions; the period for which an assembly is elected ought also to be short. The regional or provincial assemblies should have much more to do than the National Assembly, which might well be elected by

them, and should, of course, like them, consist of a single Chamber. It will be objected that the system of indirect election is undemocratic, and the example of the French Senate will be quoted. But the Senators are not chosen by political bodies like a provincial assembly; the system is doubly indirect and, as has been shown, grotesquely unjust;[1] further, the Senators are elected for nine years, and there is no means of recalling them. If the National Assembly were elected before each of its sessions on a system of proportional representation by provincial assemblies themselves elected at frequent intervals, it would be thoroughly representative of the country.

The restoration to France of Alsace-Lorraine has made the question of decentralisation an urgent one. The French Government proposes to merge the recovered provinces into the centralised French system and split them up into departments; the results of such a policy are likely to be disastrous and to cause grave discontent among the inhabitants of the provinces, who have had a considerable measure of autonomy for many years. The Alsatians that were most eager to return to France, such as the Abbé Wetterlé, have declared that a special regime would be necessary for the recovered provinces at least for a time, and there is already in Alsace a strong demand for autonomy. The inhabitants of the recovered provinces are likely in any case to suffer economically from the change, for German social legislation is much more advanced than French; there is a far better system of old age pensions and of insurance in Germany, school teachers and other Government servants are better paid, and in nearly every respect the economic conditions in Alsace-Lorraine have been better

[1] See page 100.

under the German rule than they were under the French or are likely to be. These facts make the failure of the Germans to win over these peoples of their own race and language all the more astonishing; it is a proof of incredible stupidity. But, however strong the attachment of the Alsace-Lorrainers to France, it is likely to be seriously impaired sooner or later if to economic losses are added political causes for discontent. If the French people are wise, they will insist on the creation of provincial assemblies in Alsace and in the reconstituted province of Lorraine composed of the two portions which have been separated for nearly half a century. That would be a first step towards decentralisation; it would not be long before the rest of France demanded the same liberties.

One of the chief obstacles to this and many other necessary reforms in France is the way in which the Revolution has been made into a fetish. Because the Revolution did so much, too many Frenchmen seem to imagine that it left nothing more to be done and reached finality. One sees the Declaration of the Rights of Man quoted sometimes in French papers as if it were a body of inspired dogma which it is impious to question—such papers as the *Temps* often find it convenient to quote it against Socialism and even against the income tax, which is supposed to be condemned by the fact that the Revolutionaries believed in indirect taxation. That belief was, of course, a reaction against the oppressive personal taxes of the *ancien régime* and was made possible only by inadequate understanding of the incidence of taxation. Yet surely one may have even a passionate admiration for the Revolution and for the great work that it accomplished—every true Frenchman must have—

destroyed. This alliance between the bourgeoisie and the peasantry, which has continued ever since, although it has been weakening for several years, was a natural one, for, after all, the peasants—those that own land—are themselves bourgeois in the strict sense of the term. A bourgeois is a person that owns property—land or capital—however small, and all the peasants, except the small minority of agricultural labourers, own property. There is, of course, this great difference between the bourgeoisie and the peasants—that the property of the latter consists entirely or chiefly of land which they work themselves and that they live by their own labour, not on rent or interest. The peasant never retires on his savings, he works as long as he is able to do so, and that is usually until the day of his death. A large section of the bourgeoisie, on the other hand, consists of people with incomes derived from rent or interest on property which they either inherited or accumulated. The *petit rentier* class, which lives on small unearned incomes, is the most conservative, the most prejudiced, the most stupid, the most sordid and the most avaricious class in France: the class that has always thrown its whole weight against reforms, especially social reforms, the class that has supported colonial expansion and a bellicose and provocative foreign policy in the mistaken belief that war would be profitable. It is now beginning to find out its mistake.

France is not only a bourgeois country, it is also to a very large extent a country of small property. Great fortunes, although industrial development and, above all, financial enterprises have made them more numerous in recent years than they once were, are still much fewer than in England or America. Property is more equally divided in

France, and the law secures to a great extent its constant subdivision, while at the same time it does much to secure its transmission from one generation to another in the same families and to prevent its changing hands.[1] I have already mentioned the advantages of the system of small property, which was the work of the Revolution; its disadvantages, both economic and social, both moral and material, far outweigh the advantages. Small property has had a disastrous effect on the French people. It is chiefly responsible for the survival of obsolete methods of production, and it has produced excessive conservatism in business methods, want of enterprise, lack of initiative, timidity and, above all, avarice. One does not find before the Revolution evidence of the excessive prudence, especially in regard to money matters, the inordinate respect, amounting in some cases to worship, of money, which have been too prevalent in modern France. Nowhere else have I met so often with the real spirit of the miser who loves and hoards money for its own sake, who has a positive affection for the very coins and likes to finger them and stroke them. French peasants will often make a bad bargain because they cannot resist a handful of gold or a bundle of bank notes spread out on a table before them; one sees in their glistening eyes the evidence of an uncontrollable passion. The very word used in French for receiving payment of a sum of money indicates this curious passion for handling the actual coin: "je vais toucher l'argent," a Frenchman says—"I am going to finger the money." But let nobody be led into hasty generalisations

[1] By French law a married man is obliged to leave the bulk of his property to his wife and children He may give a slight advantage to one child; otherwise the children must all share equally.

and proceed to write down the whole French nation as misers. There are extremely generous people in France, plenty of them, and they are to be found in all classes. I have come across examples of great generosity on the part of peasants who are commonly, and with some reason, regarded as the most thrifty class of the population. But generosity is more prevalent among those who earn their living by their brains or their hands and live in towns than it is among any class of property-holders. The least avaricious people in France as a rule are the proletariat and the professional, literary and artistic classes, especially those of what are called bohemian tendencies. The proletariat is indeed almost entirely free from avarice, for it is but little addicted to the vice of thrift. The workman as a rule spends his money as he earns it, as a man ought to do and as all would in reasonable economic conditions, or saves only a reasonable proportion for a rainy day. And the workman, who is at the mercy of an employer and may risk his whole livelihood by action, or even by the expression of opinions, unpalatable to the possessing classes, is more willing to take that risk than is a property owner to risk the loss or even the diminution of his property. The proletariat is the class in France that has the most moral courage, the most generosity, the least respect for officials and constituted authority, the most independence of character and the most initiative. In a word, it is, on the whole, the finest class of the French people, and on it the salvation of France mainly depends. But it must have the co-operation of that section of the intellectual and artistic bourgeoisie which shares its qualities and is still true to the generous ideals of a Daumier, a Victor Hugo, a Courbet, or an Anatole France. It will also, I am convinced, have the co-operation of a

large proportion of the peasants, who are beginning to realise that they have more in common with the proletariat than with the bourgeoisie, and among whom there is a marked tendency towards Socialism. The demoralising influence of small property may have obscured the great qualities of the French peasantry, but it has not destroyed them; above all, it has left intact their innate good sense. It has to be remembered in justice to the peasants that it was not merely concern for their property and the fear of Socialism that made them join with the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. Right down to the last decade of the last century the proletariat, and in particular the proletariat of Paris, was not only revolutionary and republican but also bellicose. The wars for which it clamoured were usually wars for an ideal, in accordance with the later revolutionary tradition; it wanted France to conduct a crusade all over Europe for the liberation of oppressed nations, such as Italy and Poland. The good sense of the peasants made them averse from war for any object, and it was they who, in conjunction with the Monarchists, insisted on peace in 1871 against the Republican proletariat of the towns. Who will say that they were wrong after our recent experience of a war for ideals—and its results?

There is, in fact, nearly if not quite as much avarice among certain classes of the bourgeoisie in France as among the peasants. and it has less excuse, for when a man's livelihood depends on tilling the land, it is natural that he should guard the land jealously. It is also inevitable that the people with small incomes derived from property should cling desperately to that property; the *petit rentier* could hardly be other than what he is. But in France the rich are

not as a rule generous, unless they happen to be Jews. There are, of course, very generous individuals even among wealthy people, but they are comparatively few. The bourgeois do not seem to understand how unwise even from the point of view of their own self-interest their stinginess has been. In many respects the mentality of the bourgeois and that of the peasant are very much alike, and it is only natural that this should be so, since the majority of the bourgeois are the descendants of peasants. At the time of the Revolution the bourgeoisie was small in numbers and consisted of merchants and shopkeepers; the industrial revolution had not yet created the great manufacturer and the modern financial magnate. The *grande bourgeoisie* which sprang from the Revolution was, as I have already said, mainly recruited from the peasantry. During the nineteenth century the bourgeoisie continued to be recruited from the sons of peasants immigrating into the towns from the country much more than from the proletariat, for the peasants have means to give a son a good education and the workman has not. The peasant still survives in the bourgeois even after several generations; the bourgeois is often a peasant demoralised by freedom from the necessity of earning his living. For the bourgeois has adopted to a great extent the old aristocratic ideal of "independent means" which enable a man to live without working. In the bourgeoisie the spender is more highly esteemed than the producer. This trait has been remarked by an acute observer of modern France, himself a Frenchman, M. Albert-Léon Guérard. "French social life," he says, "is still ruled by the old feudal prejudice that manual labour is servile and even that any gainful occupation is demeaning. The French ideal is not so much wealth as freedom from

ignoble toil. We need hardly say that this conception does not spring from laziness, for French industry is proverbial. Throughout the nineteenth century every small manufacturer or tradesman aspired to the moment when he could abandon his business, which he really loved, and on a minimum competency set up as a gentleman."[1] This is profoundly true, but I cannot follow M. Guérard when he attributes to "this aristocratic prejudice which ranks the spender higher than the toiler" the fact that there is an unusually large "disinterested and cultured public" in France. It is true that the disinterested and cultured public is unusually large, but the very last class that can be called either disinterested or cultured is the class of *petits rentiers*, who have set up as gentlemen on a minimum competency. The large disinterested and cultured public is recruited chiefly from people that work with their brains or their hands, not from the commercial bourgeoisie, whether still actively engaged in business or in retirement. And just as the Jews are the most generous as a rule of the wealthy class, so they are on the whole the most disinterested and cultured. The majority of the rich men in Paris that are really interested in literature or collect pictures and other works of art with real taste and appreciation are Jews; yet the Jews are a very small minority of the French population, much less numerous than in England, still more so than in Germany. Moreover, the proportion of Jews among eminent men of science, university professors and *savants*, and men of distinction in all the learned professions is extraordinarily large in France. The Jews have not the *petit bourgeois* mentality, which is that of a peasant demoralised,

[1] "French Civilisation in the Nineteenth Century" (T. Fisher Unwin, 1914), page 176.

and they have a remarkable faculty of combining what is called the artistic temperament with practical capacity, such as is possessed to the same degree by no other race. The anti-Semite, who represents the Jew as a man with no interest in life but that of amassing money, makes a fundamental mistake. It is just because the Jew is not that as a rule that the gentile Frenchman, of whom the charge is more often true, sometimes finds it so hard to hold his own against him.

If, indeed, the parsimonious thrift of the small French bourgeois were due, as M. Guérard seems to think, merely to a desire to secure an independence which would give leisure for intellectual pursuits, one could only commend it. But I am afraid that that is not the case. The desire to become a gentleman—a *rentier*—is not at all the same thing. Certainly a man is wiser to retire from business at an age when he can still enjoy life rather than go on merely for the sake of amassing more money like the American millionaire. But, unfortunately, when a man up to the age of fifty or more has had no interest in life but that of laboriously adding one sou to another, he is not likely to acquire another at that age. It is probably because the American millionaire recognises this that he does not retire. But although the American business man has too often no interest in life but that of making money, his life is less sordid than that of the French *petit bourgeois*; for he makes money while the other only saves it—there is a great difference between the two. The making of money as it is understood in America is itself an exciting pursuit, which has all the attractions of gambling, and the American at least spends while he is making; he is the least avaricious person in the world, and it is far more the excitement of making the money than its actual

possession which attracts him. The tales of American business romance published in American magazines reveal a career as venturesome and exciting as that of a highwayman. There is nothing venturesome or exciting in the life of a small French tradesman engaged in piling up sous, and when his ambition is attained and he retires to become a small *rentier*, he usually leads a life of dismal vacuity, for the only interest has gone out of it. He remains the incarnation of the *petit bourgeois* spirit.

That spirit is, in fact, to too great an extent the spirit of the French bourgeoisie as a whole. The bourgeoisie, since it has been the master of France, has committed many political mistakes. but, if its power is now irretrievably jeopardised, as I am convinced that it is, perhaps its meanness and stinginess are even more to blame. The French bourgeoisie has, I believe, committed suicide as surely as did the noblesse of the eighteenth century. Even the war has not made the bourgeois loosen their purse-strings. "These people are quite willing to let their sons be killed," said an eminent Frenchman two or three years ago, "but you mustn't ask them for five francs." It was a severe judgment, but there was too much justification for it. At the beginning of the war a national fund was opened in France as in England for the relief of sufferers from the war; the total of the subscriptions never exceeded more than two or three hundred thousand pounds, of which the greater part was given by Jews, and the fund simply fizzled out long before the war was over. In England millions of pounds were raised for the same object. The wealthy classes in France have never been willing to pay their fair share of taxation; their resistance to the income tax was an incredible manifestation of

stances. Thirdly, owners of large property have at least the possibility of dealing generously with their tenants or employees if they wish; small property owners have not. The Parisian landlord is the most mean and rapacious that I have ever encountered. It is usually difficult to get him to do the most ordinary repairs; he exacts conditions exceeding even the monstrous rights given him by the law, and when you pay your rent he will ask you for a penny for the receipt stamp. Many French landlords are not in a position to keep their houses in repair because they have no means beyond the rent of perhaps a single house. I have known large landlords in England and I have known small ones in France; I prefer the former. Heaven help the unfortunate tenant that falls into the hands of a retired French grocer turned house-owner. I do not know what there is in the grocery trade that makes its effect on character particularly demoralising, but there is certainly something in the French use of the term "mentalité d'épicier."

After all, however, the wealthy landlord in France is nearly as bad as the poorer one, for, as I have said, the *grand bourgeois* is apt to have a *petit bourgeois* mentality. It was a rich man—a typical representative of the *bien-pensant* and reactionary *grande bourgeoisie* with connections in the noblesse—who, when I objected to the absence of a bath-room in an expensive flat, replied that he could not understand what anybody could want with so useless a luxury. The same gentleman strongly objected to repainting the flat, which, as I ascertained, had not been touched for at least twenty years, and it looked like it. It is not surprising that the hatred of the people of Paris for the bourgeoisie in general is multiplied fourfold in

the case of owners of house property—the Vultures, as they are commonly called. The dwellings in which the State allows Parisian landlords to put a large proportion of the proletariat and the poorer bourgeoisie are a disgrace to a civilised country. The concierge is in too many cases a worthy agent of the landlord—obsequious and obliging to bourgeois tenants provided that their Christmas-boxes and other tips are adequate, hard and disagreeable to poor tenants. That is not, of course, true of all concierges; I have known delightful ones. The position of a concierge is no doubt very difficult—he or she is a sort of buffer between the landlord and the tenant and sometimes gets the kicks of both. The system is a bad one: the concierge ought to be a porter at the service of the tenants, but in fact he or she is the servant of the landlord installed to spy upon the tenants and report on their behaviour, employed by the landlord to convey any disagreeable communication that the latter may have to make to a tenant. At the same time the concierge is expected to observe elaborate regulations and even to possess a keen psychological insight. In all apartment houses of any pretensions which have a front staircase (*grand escalier*) and a back staircase (*escalier de service*), the unfortunate concierge has to possess remarkable judgment if he is to decide the momentous question of the particular staircase to be used by any given person. In general, nobody must carry a parcel up the sacred front staircase, but a parcel is sometimes carried by a person of undoubted social position, and various professional men in France are accustomed to go about with large portfolios. The concierge of a house in which I once had a flat was so bullied by the landlord about the proper use of the staircase that he was always losing his head, and

one day sent up the back staircase to the kitchen door a friend who was coming to dine with me because, being not at all well off, he happened to be rather shabbily dressed. The same concierge was the victim of traps laid for him by the landlord, who used to send people to the house carrying inoffensive-looking parcels in order to see whether the concierge would allow them up the front staircase. So on the whole I am rather inclined to pity the concierges of the more expensive flats, from whom the tenants suffer little; for myself, I have always been on excellent terms with my concierge. But it is often otherwise in cheap flats inhabited by the poor; there the concierge is frequently a tyrant, and the tenants sometimes have to appease their ruler by tips far larger in proportion to their means and their rent than those given by the bourgeoisie. The landlord through the concierge exercises a minute supervision of the conduct and private life of the tenants. The great crime is to have a child—to have more than one is to be unworthy of any respectable dwelling. People have to conceal the fact that they have children until they have got into the flat. To a concierge—or rather to a landlord—a child ranks with dogs, cats, parrots and other noxious animals. A friend of mine, when she was visiting a flat to let, having assured the concierge, in reply to a question, that she had no child, was immediately asked whether she was expecting one; she happened, moreover, not to be married. No doubt the landlords that make these rules belong to committees for furthering the increase of the population—provided that there is no subscription. In any case it is probable that they lament the decay of morality caused by the neglect of the precepts of the Church, which shows itself in the refusal of the proletariat to have

large families. For the French bourgeois with bourgeois ideas is as hypocritical as the British. The old noblesse, with all its faults and crimes, was less repugnant than these people whose only sincere sentiment is a belief in the sacred rights of property.

If the demoralising effects of property on the character are more evident and more widespread in France than elsewhere, the system of small property is to blame. A man who has had plenty of money all his life and has never had to think about it may, and often does, lead a perfectly useless existence, but he is not likely to be sordid and petty. On the other hand, however praiseworthy may be the objects of thrift, it must inevitably engender avarice. An existence spent in laboriously accumulating money a penny at a time is a petty and sordid existence and produces a petty and sordid character. Why, indeed, need one labour the point, since the fact is admitted by all thoughtful Frenchmen? The whole of French literatuie in the nineteenth century from Balzac to Anatole France is filled with examples of the meanness and avarice produced by small property. Guy de Maupassant and Emile Zola have shown us what small property has done for the character of the peasants; Octave Mirbeau has exposed with bitter irony the avidity and hypocrisy to be found among the bourgeois. The spirit is the same—the spirit of a man whose main object in life is to accumulate a little hoard and to defend it jealously when he has accumulated it. That meanness and avarice are not innate in the French character is shown by the proletariat and by the many other French people that have not come under the demoralising influence or have emancipated themselves from it. These vices are prevalent in France only because

the cause produces its effect: the cause is small property.

The economic results of small property have been as bad as its results on character, of which they are to some extent the outcome. The lack of enterprise which is so conspicuous in France is mainly the result of timidity—of the fear of taking any risk. Napoleon said that the English were a nation of shopkeepers; a hostile critic might say of the French that they were a nation of small shopkeepers. The one statement would be as unjust a generalisation as the other, but each has some foundation. The French are as a rule successful only in a small way of business; nobody knows better than they—and this is true particularly of the women—how to make a little shop pay by rigorously watching over the expenditure of every penny. But in big business they are less successful, because they so often cannot bring themselves to risk money even when the probability of profiting by the expenditure is so *great* that the risk is infinitesimal. This is the secret of the predominance of Jews and foreigners—especially Germans before the war—in French business affairs. A Jew is far too shrewd not to understand that one cannot make money without spending it, and he is always prepared to spend it when he sees a good chance of a profitable return. That is equally true of the German business man, and also, of course, of the English and American. Unless and until the French learn that lesson they will continue to be cut out by foreigners in their own country. Before the war the foreigners were mostly Germans, for the simple reason that the Germans, having few colonies to go to, emigrated to other countries. In the immediate future no doubt it will be difficult for Germans to settle in France,

but their places will be taken by English and Americans.

Another example of this fear of taking any risk is the reluctance of French investors to find money for industrial undertakings in their own country. Even during the war, when huge profits were being made on munitions and other army supplies, people that had, as they ought not to have had, Government contracts in their pockets which absolutely secured them large profits on the supply of material which they had not the means to manufacture, could not find the necessary capital in France and had to go to England or America for it. The French investor will look only at Government securities and trustee investments. Therefore the French investors poured into the coffers of the Tsar millions which would have been better employed in the development of their own country. Their unpleasant experience in regard to the Russian loans, which has shown that Government securities are not always safe, is a wholesome lesson. If this experience be turned to account, it may have beneficial results which will to some extent compensate for the heavy loss of about two-thirds of French foreign investments. Frenchmen have sometimes taken pride in the fact that they have been the bankers of the world, that, in the words of M. Guérard, "the more go-ahead nations—America, England, Germany—have all been compelled, in time of stress, to borrow from the inexhaustible 'woollen stockings' of the French peasants."[1] It is a profound mistake. What the French have been doing is to facilitate the development of other countries while they neglected that of their own. Or rather that has been done by the property owners in France, who do not seem to understand

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 177.

that capital is much more useful to a country when it is directly employed in production than when it is lent to a foreign Government at three or four per cent. While they have been lending money to other countries, Germans and other foreigners have been employing their capital to develop the resources of France for their own profit. Herein, as has been said in a previous chapter, is to be found the explanation of the exceptional power of high finance in France.

The timidity of the French bourgeois has also led him into a hide-bound conservatism in business and other practical matters. French business methods are just about a century behind the times. How can it be otherwise? One always takes certain risks in making a change. An American friend of mine in Paris related to me an amusing example of the conviction of most French business men that any change in the methods of their great-grandfathers is almost unthinkable. He made a proposal to a number of leading men in a certain trade in Paris, the very trade in which one would most expect to find intelligent people, and undoubtedly the persons in question are intelligent—I know several of them and can vouch for the fact. A meeting was arranged between my American friend and the others, at which he expounded his scheme in full detail. There was a general agreement that it was a good one and likely to prove profitable to all concerned, but its author was met by an insuperable objection: "Ce n'est pas dans nos mœurs"—it is not in accordance with our customs. The American was so taken aback that he replied with perhaps somewhat impolite abruptness: "Then you had better change them." The curious thing is that Parisians, at any rate, have an exaggerated love of novelty in many regards and like nothing better

than a new fashion or custom, but business tradition is like the Ark of the Covenant—it must not be touched. Even some of the most enlightened business men in Paris are astonishingly insular; they do not even know the names of important firms in their own line of business in other countries, still less appreciate the possibilities of dealing with them. I remember making, at the request of a friend in New York, a suggestion to a friend in Paris, who is a leading representative of the business in which both were engaged, a suggestion which seemed to me obviously to the advantage of both. My Parisian friend agreed at once—as a favour to me; he honestly did not understand that there could be any advantage to him in doing so. Important French firms are sometimes incredibly parsimonious: I have heard of cases in which firms hesitated about sending samples abroad and publishers even demurred to sending a free copy of a book to a foreign publisher who proposed to have it translated. These are but examples of the dread of risking money even if it be only a question of a franc or two; of course the sample might not have led to any orders, and the foreign publisher might have decided after all not to translate the book. The ordinary French business man will spend a franc if he is quite certain that the expenditure will give him a profit of ten centimes, but the possibility of losing the franc is more than he can bear. Of course there are many exceptions—there are French business men who are enterprising and do their best to introduce new methods, sometimes a difficult matter; but they are in a minority, and a large proportion of them are Jews.

One thing that strikes a foreigner about French business methods is the waste of time that they involve. Presumably from a fear of committing

themselves, French business men have a rooted objection to writing letters, and insist on an interview to settle a trivial matter which in England would be easily disposed of by correspondence or on the telephone. As French politeness requires that the first quarter of an hour of a business interview shall be spent in inquiries after the health of the respective families and general small talk, a great deal of time is taken up in this way. The amount of unnecessary time and labour expended in France is enormous; business hours in Paris are much longer than in London, but no more is done in the day. An antediluvian system of book-keeping prevails in France, where the simple method of paying all receipts into the bank and making all payments by cheque has never taken root. Although cheques are beginning to be more used, it is still the practice, even in large business concerns, to put the receipts into a safe in cash and notes and make payments out of them even for large amounts. The complication that this system causes in the accounts and the opportunities that it gives for embezzlement may easily be imagined. Dishonest cashiers are more common in France than in England for the simple reason that cashiers have more opportunities of, and temptations to, dishonesty. They are miserably paid, have large sums of money in cash always in their hands, and, if they yield to temptation, the complicated system of book-keeping makes it easy for them to conceal their depredations for a considerable time. The system of book-keeping is just as old-fashioned and complicated in banks as elsewhere, and seems to have been devised with the intention of making fraud difficult to discover, with the result that bank clerks are always disappearing with large sums in cash. There have been several sensational

cases of this kind: one gentleman, who had gone off with several thousand pounds, was arrested on a yacht on which he was making a tour of the world. The disinclination of Frenchmen to use cheques is an example of the curious passion for actually handling money and also of the timidity which fears to trust a bank. Many men with large incomes have no banking account, and if by chance they receive a cheque will cash it over the counter; they think nothing of keeping a couple of thousand pounds in their house or of carrying about a couple of hundred in their pockets. I have seen a man give a thousand-franc note to a waiter to pay for drinks in a café. This was done in a café on the Grand Boulevard on the day of the general mobilisation in 1914, and the waiter, who happened to be a German, was never seen again, nor was the thousand-franc note. It is this unwise habit of keeping large sums of money in the house or on the person that makes murders for gain, burglaries, and street attacks so common in France. The peasants still keep their savings as a rule, if not in a stocking, at any rate in a box under their beds, for they will not trust them even to the Government savings bank. The result is that every house in a French village is worth breaking into. In nearly every village there are one or two old women living alone who are known to have a few hundred francs in the house. Some day or other the ne'er-do-well of the village can no longer resist the temptation to possess himself of the few hundred francs, and when the old woman calls for help, he knocks her on the head to avoid discovery. That is the simple history of the typical murder so deplorably prevalent in French country districts. In the towns the chances are that any bourgeois flat, even a poor one, will contain enough money

to make burglary worth while, and that any well-dressed man in the street will have at least twenty pounds on his person—possibly a great deal more.

The refusal to make use of the banking system and make payments by cheque has other grave inconveniences. It is a heavy expense to the State, which is obliged to mint a much larger quantity of coins than would otherwise be the case; the amount of coinage in circulation at any given moment in France is several times larger than in England. Since the war the Government has been appealing to the public to use cheques as much as possible, but the appeals do not seem to have had much effect. People that wish to use cheques often find a difficulty in getting them accepted, either because the person to whom a cheque is offered has no banking account and objects to the trouble of cashing it, or because he is suspicious of any payment not made in specie. Every lease in France contains the stipulation that the rent must be paid in gold and silver coins, but there are now many landlords who accept cheques. These mediæval methods of payment make the collection of debts a complicated affair involving much useless labour. In England a tradesman sends an account to his customer and waits a reasonable time for a cheque. In France he has to keep employees to carry round receipted bills to the customers' houses to collect the money, and they often call half a dozen times before they get it, as the customer may be out or unwilling to pay. As for the Government, although it urges people to use cheques, it does not set the example; if one has to be paid anything by any public office, one has to go and fetch the money. The same is the case in regard to all public services, such as gas companies, whose methods are even

more absurd than those of business in general. Before one can get gas or electric light, one has to pay several visits to the office of the company and finally to sign three copies of a long agreement. The affection for what the French appropriately call "paperasses" (waste paper) on the part of all authorities, public bodies, and Government offices is, of course, a positive disease. A Frenchman spends half his life in signing papers, apparently for no object but that of providing easy employment for an army of otherwise useless officials.

It must be admitted that the French banks have done nothing to induce people to use them to a greater extent. The French banking system is as obsolete as French business methods. There is no clearing house, and a cheque paid into one bank in Paris is carried by a messenger, called the "garçon de recette," to the bank on which it is drawn and cashed over the counter; if the cheque be drawn on a provincial bank, the bank into which it is paid sends it to its agent in the place in question, who treats it in the same way. These bank messengers, who are always going about with large sums of money in their satchels, are marked out as the victims of aggression, especially as they wear a uniform and a cocked hat to enable the apaches to identify them at once. It is their business also to collect bills when they become due. The payment of accounts by bills at three months is a very common practice in France. If the drawer of the bill has a banking account he may make it payable at his bank, but that is seldom the case; as a rule the person in whose favour the bill is drawn gives it to a bank to collect, and it is presented when it becomes due at the house of the drawer. The bills collected by the bank messengers either at banks or elsewhere may easily amount to several thousand

pounds in a single day, and with such sums they walk about the streets of Paris. A trick which has more than once been resorted to is the following: two accomplices agree that one shall draw a bill on the other, and when the bank messenger comes to present the bill they knock him on the head and empty his satchel. It is quite simple. French banks pay interest on current accounts, but they also deduct a small commission from every cheque paid into the account; the result at the end of every six months is an account of the interest and commission on several foolscap pages, resulting in a balance on one side or the other of frs.4.85. It does not seem to have occurred to any bank that this is so much waste labour, and that it would be much simpler to suppress both interest and commission. By law a French bank is not obliged to honour the cheques of a client in any one day to a greater aggregate amount than frs. 10,000 (£400), unless the client has given at least two days' notice of his intention to draw to a larger amount. In practice many banks waive this right and honour any cheques presented for which there is provision, but all do not. The consequence is that some business firms send to their bank every day a list of the cheques that they have drawn—another piece of useless labour arising from an absurd and indeed unjust legal provision. The French law favours banks just as it favours landlords. It is not surprising that people without banking accounts do not care for cheques, for it is a long business to cash one at a French bank, and one is lucky if it takes less than a quarter of an hour; half an hour is quite normal in one of the large Parisian banks. After one has handed in the cheque at one counter, it makes the tour of the premises, passing from one employee to another, each of whom makes an entry

in a book; finally one receives the money at another counter or at a sort of cage in which the cashier is confined. The last thing that French banks seem to desire is legitimate banking business. They give no facilities to their customers and will not accept registered stock as security for an overdraft or a loan, only bonds payable to bearer. On the other hand, they sometimes embark on enterprises of a kind in which no English bank would be permitted to engage. The net result of the French banking system is that enterprising and progressive French business men are deserting the French banks for the foreign banks established in France, and the French bankers are being cut out by their English, American, and, before the war, German competitors. During the last ten years foreign banks have greatly developed in Paris. At the beginning of the war one at least of the great French joint stock banks would have stopped payment but for the banking moratorium, which indeed was decreed chiefly for the purpose of saving it. The French bankers can suggest only one remedy for this state of affairs—Protection, that panacea of too many Frenchmen; they want foreign banks to be penalised or excluded from France. It does not occur to them that it is they who are to blame for the success of the foreign banks and that the true remedy is to reform their own methods.

In the national finance one finds the same sort of methods as in business and banking. Local taxes are collected by the mediæval system of the octroi, a tax on the food brought into a town, which, of course, falls most heavily on the poor. The system of direct taxation was until recently equally out-of-date, and there is a host of petty and vexatious indirect taxes, stamp duties, etc., which are so many pin-pricks in the skin of

the citizen, and some of which are hardly worth the cost of collection. One is always having to buy stamped paper merely to make some application to an official or for some other purpose, or having to pay a few pence for the privilege of signing one's name to something or other. In fact, the whole system of finance is as pettifogging as it is antiquated. During the half-century of the Third Republic France has had only two statesmen with financial ability—M. Rouvier and M. Caillaux; M. Rouvier is dead and M. Caillaux is in prison, the victim of the undying hatred of the bourgeoisie for the author of the income tax. M. Caillaux would no doubt have been wiser had he listened to those who used in regard to the income tax the universal objection to all change: "Ce n'est pas dans nos mœurs." The establishment of the income tax might at last have given France a straightforward and simple system of finance, but all the old taxes except the *patente* have been left in existence, and M. Caillaux's income tax scheme has been so emasculated and is so inadequately applied that most of the benefit of the reform has been lost. At present, thanks to the incompetence of M. Ribot and M. Klotz, French national finance is in so hopeless a state of chaos that even a genius would shrink from tackling it. The only man in France that could do so with the slightest hope of success is M. Caillaux.

Although the State is petty in its dealings with the taxpayer and parsimonious in small things, it is also very extravagant; French national finance, like French business, is too often conducted on a system which is at once penny wise and pound foolish. Money is wasted on hosts of useless officials, whose number is constantly being increased in order that places may be found for

friends and political supporters; there is no adequate supervision of Government contracts, in connection with which there are often very shady proceedings, with the result that the State frequently pays twice as much as it need; there is lavish expenditure on "special missions" to foreign countries and on perquisites of all sorts; State grants and subsidies are distributed recklessly and without adequate reason: it is all "aux frais de la Princesse," and the "Princess"—that is to say, the State—can afford to pay. So the national expenditure goes up annually by leaps and bounds, but there is never any money available for really useful objects. I cannot better sum up the situation than in the words of M. Guérard: "Meanness may be as bad a source of extravagance as reckless daring; the business as well as the national affairs of France, since the triumph of the middle class, have too often been conducted in a *petit bourgeois* spirit which is at the same time stingy and wasteful."[1]

French conservatism extends to most of the practical matters of life. No people is more open to new ideas or more suspicious of new methods. The inadequacy of the laws relating to hygiene and sanitation has already been mentioned; they would not remain as they are if there were any general demand for their amendment, but in fact there is not. The bulk of the bourgeoisie seem quite content that landlords should regard a bathroom as the luxury of the few and add about £20 a year on to the rent of any flat that contains one. The sanitary arrangements even in expensive flats are simply incredible. The first house in which I lived in Paris—it was in the Faubourg St. Germain—was not connected with the main drainage

[1] *Op. cit*, p. 177.

system, as I discovered only after I had signed the agreement, and there was no constant water supply in the water-closet; the cistern had to be filled by hand. The stench, when the cesspool under the courtyard was cleared out periodically, was indescribable. In the flat to which I next moved—a more expensive one in the neighbourhood of the Madeleine, in the very centre of Paris—the house was indeed attached to the main drainage system, but there was hardly any flow of water in the closet and the apparatus seemed to be about a century old. The landlord graciously allowed me to put in a new apparatus at my own expense on condition that I bound myself in the lease to remove it at the end of the tenancy and replace it by the old one if he so desired. I cannot think that this condition was anything but an empty demonstration of the landlord's rights; in any case, when I left the flat, he did not require me to remove the improvement that I had made. When the old apparatus was removed the stench was so poisonous that the workmen, who after all were used to such things and were not squeamish, were nearly made ill. I never in my life saw an apparatus in so horribly filthy a condition; its removal would have been ordered by a sanitary inspector in England years before. It is amazing that a people so enlightened as the French should accept such conditions and that any Government in the twentieth century should tolerate them. But the propertied classes in France are the masters of the country, and, until they are dispossessed, no change is likely. If these are the conditions in expensive bourgeois flats, it may be imagined in what conditions the proletariat lives. The results on the health of the nation are deplorable. Even in some country

districts the sanitary conditions are such that tuberculosis is rampant. Some country districts are, of course, more enlightened than others; as a rule the enlightened districts are those where the schoolmaster is the predominant influence and the others those in which the predominant influence is that of the curé. I know a district in the Franche-Comté which comes within the latter category; nearly everybody in the place goes to Mass and the school is very badly attended. The peasants, most of whom are quite well off, live in the most filthy conditions, with animals in their houses and so-called dust-heaps immediately under their windows. In that lovely valley, where the purest air is available for everybody, there were at the time of my last visit a few years ago several cases of consumption in a population of between two and three hundred. Both the mayor's sons were tuberculous, and the only remedy to which their father had resorted, with the full approval of the curé, was that of sending them on a pilgrimage to a neighbouring miraculous shrine, which does not seem to have been in working order, for both the sons have since died. The village schoolmaster, a man of some intelligence, deplored to me the insanitary habits of the population and did his best to get them altered. The only result of his efforts was that the curé denounced him as an atheist and advised his flock from the pulpit not to send their children to school, an advice which they readily followed, as they much preferred to use their labour in the fields. Improved hygiene in France would mean an enormous diminution in such diseases as tuberculosis and typhoid and a great reduction of the death-rate, which is much higher than it ought to be. But few people in France seem to realise that fact or to regard any

change in the "mœurs" as possible in this or in any other respect. There can hardly be anywhere in the world a conservatism so conservative as French conservatism; only when one knows the country does one realise how obstinate it is and how immense is its force of resistance to all change. In many respects France is still a mediæval country. Even that strange combination of an excessive desire for gain with an excessive susceptibility in regard to the "point of honour" which one often finds in France is typically mediæval; my friend Mr. Oswald Barron, who knows the Middle Ages as well as he knows his own time, assures me that it was characteristic of the age of chivalry.

One reason why business methods are so backward in France is that too many of the most promising young men do not go into commerce and industry, but swarm into the professions and the Government service. One reason of this is the desire of parents outside or on the verge of the bourgeoisie to make their son a bourgeois; the other is their fear of taking any risks, which leads them to prefer to a business career for their sons the security of the Government service with a pension at the end of it. Peasants and small tradesmen will deny themselves and make immense sacrifices to make their son a minor Government official, although Government officials are miserably underpaid and the son would have a better chance of doing well for himself in any other calling, even that of an artisan. But the minor Government official is a bourgeois, his pay, though small, is certain, he will never lose his job except in case of gross misconduct, and there is always the prestige that attaches in France to an official of any kind.

Moreover, the young man in an official position, however humble, may hope to marry a girl with a small *dot*. Thus in too many cases is capacity which might have been usefully employed wasted in a life of dull and underpaid monotony. There is no class in France more to be pitied than these bourgeois who have to keep up appearances on less than the wages of a navvy. Sometimes a talent for writing enables the victim to escape into journalism or literature. The Government service has given us a Georges Courteline, and he out of his experience of it has given us "Messieurs les Ronds-de-Cuir," which makes us grateful that he has been through the mill.

The professions are also overcrowded with young men, many of whom would be better employed in agriculture, commerce or industry, for the professions are an avenue to a political career: lawyers and doctors swarm in politics. And a political career is the avenue to various kinds of success for an able and ambitious man. If he chooses the Left he may hope some day to be a Minister or even President of the Republic; if he chooses the Right he may aspire to the society of the Faubourg St. Germain, to the Institute, and even to the Académie Française; in any case he will have the chance of making money without working for it. The consequences are, to quote M. Guérard once more, that "agriculture, commerce, industry and labour are deprived of their natural leadership. The work of material production, thus despised, is too often left to narrow-minded and sordid petty capitalists, thrifty and hard-working enough, but deficient in foresight and enterprise." [1]

It may be asked why the young men themselves agree to this. The answer is that too many of

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 177.

them lack the initiative to assert themselves and allow their career to be decided for them; they submit to the oppressive influence of the French Family, which is often destructive of initiative and personal independence. So are the French system of property and the law of bequest, which secures to children an absolute reversion to the property of their parents. Too many young men in France know that they have not to depend entirely on their own exertions, that there is property behind them which they must some day inherit if they survive their parents. They are more secure than the son of an American millionaire, who is often turned out on the world to make his own living and given to understand that his share in his father's property depends on his own conduct. How often in England has one seen young men ruined by the possession of a small income, which paralysed their energies by relieving them of the absolute necessity of working and led them to drift into a life of idleness! In France the number of young men with some small property or the prospect of it is very much larger, and, although young Frenchmen nearly always have some occupation, the possession or prospect of private means, however small, leads them to prefer a safe and easy occupation in which, although the gains may be small, there is no risk and no necessity for individual effort. The professions do not, of course, come within that category, but the Government service does. An active and energetic Government servant—and there are a few—reaps no benefit from his activity and energy; he has the same pay as the others, who just put in a few hours occasionally at their office and do in a perfunctory way the very small amount of work that is necessary, and he has no more chance of pro-

motion. One of the reasons, perhaps the chief reason, why there are more enterprise and initative in England, in America, and in Germany than in France is that in those countries a much larger proportion of men have no property and have nothing but their own energies to depend upon. The only healthy society is one in which everybody earns his living and nobody has anything but what he earns. That ideal can be attained only by the abolition of private property in the means of production, but, until it is attained, a country like the United States, where few own property but the opportunities of earning are great, is in a more healthy condition economically than a country where many own property but the opportunities of earning are small. It is much better for a country that money should constantly change hands, that fortunes should be easily made and as easily lost, than that the capital should be held by generations of "narrow-minded and sordid petty capitalists." It is said that the French system produces stability; perhaps it does, but a dynamic society is more alive than a static one, and social stability may easily become stagnation. Of course, huge individual fortunes—the concentration of a large proportion of the capital of a country in a few hands as in the United States—are a danger. Such conditions might end in a servile State controlled by a few plutocrats—that is already to some extent the case in the United States. But the very fact that the property owners are few will make it much more easy to get rid of them when once the nation is determined to do so. France is even more a plutocracy than America, and the lot of the propertyless is all the worse from the fact that their masters are many. The great financiers who really rule France can always

rely on the support of the army of property owners, who form a solid barrier against all change and to whom the conservatism and the backwardness of France in so many respects are mainly due.

The smallness of earnings in France is itself the result of the subdivision of property, and the thrift of the French people has in the end benefited only the purely capitalist class—those who have attained enough property to live entirely on rent and interest. One reason why workmen have higher wages in England and America than in France is that English and American workmen have never been thrifty. Wages in France are not merely nominally lower than in England or America; their purchasing power is less. Indeed the cost of living of the proletariat is higher in France than in England, so that the superiority of English wages is even greater than appears from the nominal money values. And even if the cost of living all round be higher in the United States than in France—a point as to which I am very doubtful—the difference is nothing like so great as that between the nominal money value of the wages. In countries where people do not save the employers are obliged in the end to pay higher wages, especially if the proletariat be strongly organised; in a country where most people save and, therefore, always have something to fall back upon, the majority will always accept lower wages than they would if they had nothing to fall back upon. The French proletariat does not practise thrift as do the peasants and the small bourgeois, but it is still more thrifty than the English or American proletariat—and its employers reap the benefit. The wages of the French proletariat have tended to rise steadily as it became less and less thrifty,

and its trade organisations have become stronger, although they are still weaker than in England or America, partly because the proletariat in France is a smaller portion of the population than in the other two countries, partly because men that have other resources, however small, in addition to their earnings are less willing to join Trade Unions than men that have none. But it is in regard to salaries that the effect of the subdivision of property on earnings is most marked. All the salaried classes in France are miserably underpaid, from the highest to the lowest—Government servants, judges, professors and teachers no less than bank clerks and office employees. The difference between salaries in France and salaries in England or America is far greater than the difference between wages. A French judge of the High Court does not get more than about £1,200 a year and the Keeper of Pictures in the Louvre has a salary of £600. The low rate of salaries is due to the assumption that either a man has private means or else his wife has a *dot* —and that is very often the case. So it is assumed in fixing the salaries of women that every woman has a man to keep her, and there were before and even during the war directors of theatres in Paris not ashamed to pay chorus girls eighty francs (£3 4s.) a month. During the strike of the *midinettes* (the employees in the dress-making and millinery trades) in Paris in 1917 one of the leading employers said to the strikers: "I don't see why you want higher wages; you can always get a man to keep you." The result of this system is that the men that have no private means and whose wives have no *dots*, the women that either cannot or will not find a man to keep them, cannot possibly live on their salaries, and

the further result is that they are tempted to get money by other means—not always very scrupulous. One of the reasons of the prevalence of corruption in the public service and of defaulting cashiers in banks and business houses is the disgraceful inadequacy of the salaries paid. Governments and private employers that pay salaries on which a man cannot live deserve to be cheated, and they frequently are.

It is easy to understand how the subdivision of property tends to reduce salaries, for we have a parallel case in England in the payment of women's labour. Before the war the salaries and wages paid to women were low chiefly because a large proportion of the employed were either married women or girls that lived at home who, not being entirely dependent on their earnings, were willing to accept low salaries. The possession by a large proportion of French employees of a small amount of property has exactly the same effect. In both cases the consequences are disastrous for those that have nothing but their earnings to depend on. Ultimately the salaried classes of the bourgeoisie in France would be better off if they had no property; the tendency that they are now showing to combine with the proletariat is perhaps a symptom that they are beginning to recognise that fact. It is a sign of change when actors, artists and bank clerks form Trade Unions and affiliate themselves to the General Confederation of Labour.

The practice of illicit commissions is rampant in France, and although a law was recently passed to suppress it, it is unlikely to have much effect. So general has the habit of giving and receiving commissions become that it has spread to the classes of the community not engaged in business;

there are plenty of men and women belonging to the authentic noblesse that do not hesitate to accept commissions from dealers for selling works of art to their friends or to American millionaires that have penetrated into the Faubourg St. Germain. One lady belonging to an historic French family boasted of the success with which she had planted spurious pictures on Americans. Another result of low salaries and wages is the tipping system, which is universal; one can give tips in France to people to whom one would never dare to offer one in England, to certain classes of Government officials, for instance. The tipping system, of course, does not permanently increase earnings. The tips in most cases ultimately reach the pockets of the employers, who in some trades have ceased to pay any wages at all, or even, as in the case of waiters, make their employees pay them. The waiters are now agitating for the abolition of tips, but it will be very difficult to induce the French to abandon the traditional *pourboire* which has become deeply rooted in their "mœurs." When the Duval restaurants were first started tips were prohibited and the waitresses were paid wages, but it was soon found impossible to enforce the prohibition. Some customers insisted on giving tips and naturally got the most attention; finally, the prohibition was abandoned, and so was the payment of wages to the waitresses, who now pay two francs a day, in return for which they get their meals, and depend for their earnings entirely on the tips. In French theatres the employees are paid no wages and have to prey on the public. Before one reaches one's seat in a Parisian theatre one has to run the gauntlet of three *ouvreuses*, the lady who presides over the cloak-room, the lady who sells programmes, and

the lady who shows one to one's seat, with the result that the price of the seat is considerably augmented.

The effects of the subdivision of property on agriculture are quite as bad as on commerce and industry. Peasant proprietorship has now been tried in France for more than a century; it was no doubt an improvement on the old system of land tenure, and for a time it worked well. It has had, as I said in a previous chapter, the enormous advantage of setting the peasant free from the domination of the château and the curé and making him independent. But the introduction of agricultural machinery and of new agricultural methods has made peasant proprietorship an anachronism and it is becoming more and more evident that it is doomed. The agricultural methods of France are in general as obsolete as its business methods. They vary, of course, in different parts of the country—some are more progressive and enlightened than others—but over a great part of France one can still see ploughs that look as if they came out of a miniature in a mediæval manuscript being drawn by a yoke of oxen. It is very picturesque but hardly practical. The English farmer is sufficiently conservative, but the French farmer is more so. How indeed can a small peasant farmer with little education ever get to know about new discoveries or improved methods? He is content with the methods of his father and grandfather, and does not even know that there are any others. Moreover, even if he were disposed to use machinery, he could not afford to buy it, and it would not pay to buy it for a farm so small as most of the farms in France. In some parts of France, especially in Normandy, where the farms are as a rule larger than elsewhere,

a certain amount of machinery is used; as a rule the farmers hire it. Since the war the Government has made a half-hearted attempt to supply machinery to the farmers, but it has not gone very far. Undoubtedly considerable progress has been made in some regards, for example, wine-growing has been greatly extended during recent years, and the vineyards of France are one of the most valuable national assets. Perhaps it is in nursery gardening that most progress has been made, particularly in the neighbourhood of Paris and other large towns. The great increase in productivity obtained by intensive culture makes it profitable to grow fruit and vegetables within easy distance of large towns, where land is expensive, and one gets vegetables in Paris as fresh as if they had come out of one's own garden. Never have I been able in London to get such lettuces as one has in Paris. But wine-growing and nursery gardening do not require machinery and can be carried on satisfactorily on a small scale. That is not the case with other branches of agriculture. Every peasant proprietor wants to grow some of everything on his small farm, with the result that it is divided up into small patches of various crops, often without much regard for the qualities of the land. The first aim of the peasant proprietor is to grow what he wants for himself, and although this primitive system is attractive from the sentimental point of view, it is not suited to modern economic conditions. Production on a large scale has too many advantages to be abandoned, and those advantages are as great in agriculture as in other industries. I am told by agricultural experts that the corn production of France is considerably less than it ought to be for the amount of land employed.

One of the worst results of peasant proprietorship is the amount of useless labour that it involves. Nowhere in France, so far as I know, are the fields dug with spades as they still sometimes are in Italy, but in many parts of France the farmers have not got much beyond that stage. The system of growing crops in small patches and the lack of machinery make the life of the agricultural population one of monotonous and unending toil. The time has now come when this system of isolated production on a small scale will have to be altered, for the simple reason that it is no longer possible to find the labour for it. Unless there is an immediate and radical change in French agricultural methods, a large quantity of land will inevitably go out of cultivation. Even before the war the problem of agricultural labour was already becoming serious. For many years there has been a steady exodus from the country into the towns; in the five years 1906-1911 the rural population decreased by about 600,000 and the urban population increased by about 950,000.[1] No census has

[1] Between 1872 and 1911, whereas the whole population of France increased by 3,498,588, that of the department of the Seine (Paris and its suburbs) increased by 1,933,982, and the aggregate population of the other seventy-nine towns that had in 1911 more than 30,000 inhabitants by 2,421,346, so that in the thirty-nine years the population of the rest of France, which is far from being exclusively rural, decreased by 856,740. The decrease in the rural population must have been at least 2½ millions. The number of towns with more than 30,000 and less than 50,000 inhabitants rose from twenty in 1872 to forty-one in 1911, that of towns with more than 50,000 and less than 100,000 from fourteen to twenty-four, and the number of towns with 100,000 inhabitants or more from nine to fifteen. In 1906–1911 the increase of population in the department of the Seine alone (305,421) was nearly as great as the increase in the whole of France (349,264). The aggregate population of the Seine and of the seventy-nine provincial towns with more than 30,000 inhabitants increased in 1906–1911 by 656,149—306,885 more than the increase in the whole of France. Between 1901

been taken since 1911, but it is certain that the exodus has continued, and the Director of Statistics, M. March, considers that it is likely to continue. One reason of it is compulsory military service: the young rustics during their two or three years in the barracks get a taste for town life and many of them refuse to return to the country. But a more important reason is a growing disinclination for an intolerable life of dull and ceaseless toil. That disinclination is both intelligible and reasonable, and is partly the result of improved education and wider intellectual interests. Whatever the poets may say, the occupation of making holes in the ground is not an interesting one and has a deadening effect on the intelligence. The pictures that Guy de Maupassant, Flaubert, Emile Zola, Octave Mirbeau, and other French writers have given us of French rural life are not universally true, but they are true nevertheless.

The majority of French farms are worked entirely by the owner, his wife and family. Only in Normandy and other districts where the farms are larger are paid labourers employed to any extent, and their total number is comparatively small.

and 1906 the population decreased in fifty-five rural departments and increased in thirty-two predominantly urban departments; between 1906 and 1911 it decreased in sixty-four and increased in only twenty-three, all departments almost entirely urban and industrial. The depopulation of the rural districts is also shown by the fact that the number of communes with less than 400 inhabitants increased between 1906 and 1911 by 668, whereas the number of communes with more than 400 but not more than 2,000 inhabitants decreased by 667; this means that 667 communes passed from the latter into the former category In 1911 there were 33,520 communes—more that eleven-twelfths of the communes of France—with a population not exceeding 2,000, of which 16,028 had not more than 400 inhabitants; 174 communes had not more than fifty inhabitants; 1,191 more than fifty, but not more than 100; 4,970 more than 100, but not more than 200; 5,361 more than 200 but not more than 300; 4,332 from 300 to 400.

The members of a peasant farmer's family work much harder than any English agricultural labourer, not one of whom would consent to be treated by an employer as the sons and daughters of a peasant farmer are treated by their parents. In the majority of cases the sons and daughters until they marry work for their clothes, board, and lodging only and have little or no money at their own disposal. When the son marries, he brings his wife to live in his father's house and is admitted to partnership, unless the position of the family permits him to have a farm of his own; sometimes a family has two small farms, in which case the son may take one of them. As for the daughters, until they marry they are nothing but drudges, and the drudgery continues after their marriage, for they have to take their share of the work on their husbands' farms. In a country house in which I was staying some years ago I asked a housemaid, who was the daughter of a peasant farmer, why she had left her home for domestic service. She told me that it was because she found the work intolerably hard, and she explained that in the summer she rose at sunrise, worked in the fields all day until sunset, and, when she returned home, had various domestic duties which sometimes occupied her until long past midnight. It is not surprising that the younger generation is getting tired of a life like this and that young men and women are leaving the country for the towns in ever-increasing numbers. Before the war, then, French agriculture was already menaced by a serious deficiency of labour, and the war has made matters worse. I have already said that M. March in his report on the population in February, 1919, estimated that the male population in France between the ages of sixteen and sixty-five will not exceed 10,300,000 in

1935—a diminution of two millions on the figures of the last census.[1] M. March also pointed out that the rural districts would inevitably suffer the most, and indeed would probably bear almost the whole burden of the diminution, for the gaps in the towns are likely to be filled by immigrants from the country, which will thus be more depopulated than ever. The diminution in the number of men between the ages of eighteen and fifty is, of course, proportionately greater.[2] The losses of the rural population in the war—killed and permanently disabled—must have been at least a million, and if the exodus from the country into the towns was as great between 1911 and 1914 as it was in the preceding five years—it is believed to have been greater—French agriculture is faced with an immediate loss of about 1,500,000 men on its population of 1911, and a still greater one in the near future. This means ruin if the present system continues without modification.

The only possible immediate remedy seems to me a vast scheme of State-aided co-operation. The farmers in a given district should agree to work all their farms together and the State should provide an abundant supply of machinery to be hired out to them. The general use of modern agricultural machinery would very much reduce the amount of labour required. But I confess that I see little hope of any such scheme, for I know of no politicians capable of organising or even initiating it; most of them do not even seem to realise

[1] See page 50.

[2] Military service begins at the age of twenty, and men remain liable to be called under the colours until the age of forty-eight; but during the war recruits were called up at eighteen, and men who were under forty-eight at the beginning of the war were retained under the colours until the end, although some of them were by then in their fifty-second year.

that there is any problem to solve. What is really wanted is an autonomous national organisation for dealing with the matter, directed by men of practical knowledge and free from the paralysing grasp of the bureaucracy. But there is little chance of getting it. The rulers of France, with their greatest national industry, their most valuable national asset, in imminent danger of shipwreck, have been giving all their attention to securing the Saar coalfields and prohibiting imports for the benefit of a few industrial magnates. It is, no doubt, because the peasants themselves had begun to realise the difficulties which face the present agricultural system and because they had begun to feel the pinch that they were turning towards Socialism during the last few years before the war. There is reason to believe that that tendency is increasing; it is at least probable that revolutionary feeling exists to some extent among the peasants that have served in the war, as it certainly does among the urban soldiers, but there is no means at present of forming a definite opinion on the subject. During the war those that were left behind on the land have been harder worked than ever, but their profits have also been large; on the other hand they have been compelled to allow a considerable quantity of land to go out of cultivation, and in the war zone the peasants have, of course, suffered as much as everybody else. Efforts were made early in the war to induce women and girls from the towns to work on the land, but they failed completely. The women of the peasantry were heroic and worked harder than ever, but French agricultural production could not have been maintained at all without the help of German prisoners. As it was, the production of corn was reduced by one half. Parliament during the war has continued the traditional

policy of unjustly favouring the peasants at the expense of the urban population in order to obtain their support against the proletariat. Not only have incomes derived from agriculture been entirely exempted from income tax and from the tax on excess war profits, but agriculturists have even been exempted from the provisions of the law against profiteering—a formal rather than a material advantage, it is true, for the law is more or less inoperative and is never likely to be seriously enforced. It remains to be seen whether these sops will induce the peasants once more to support the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

One of the most serious consequences to France of peasant proprietorship is the policy of Protection, which continues chiefly by reason of agricultural support. French agriculture need not fear Free Trade if its methods were modern, but it is probable that the peasant proprietor with his inadequate resources and antiquated methods would not be able to face foreign competition in normal conditions. He could, of course, face it in present conditions, for the rest of the world has too much need of all its food to export much into France. One of the greatest scandals of the war was the maintenance of import duties on food, although France could no longer for the moment produce all the food that she required and prices would in any case have been extremely high without being artificially increased. At any time import duties on food are indefensible and they are of course the reason why the cost of food is always higher in France than in England. The proletariat, which has been consistently sacrificed to the bourgeoisie and to the peasants by every regime that has existed in France since the Revolution and by the

Third Republic more than any, will not much longer consent to be taxed for the benefit of the agricultural industry. But Free Trade would involve a radical change in the system and methods of agriculture. That is another reason for making the change, for which there are so many reasons. The very existence of French agriculture depends on it.

The effect of small property on character is of course particularly marked in the case of the peasants, with whom the avarice that has spread to the bourgeoisie originated. That avarice is the besetting sin of the peasant is universally admitted, and readers of Guy de Maupassant know that it is sometimes carried to extreme lengths. But I would say again by way of caution that it is not universal, and that it is more prevalent among some of the races that make up the French people than among others. Guy de Maupassant's stories are all about Normandy, and the closeness of the Norman peasant is proverbial throughout France; he is not typical of the French peasants as a whole. An English friend who was running a hospital in Ariège during the whole of the war tells me that she found the peasants extremely generous—very different in that respect from the bourgeoisie. This is not, of course, an isolated case; generosity will be found among peasants everywhere. But it remains true that their characters have been damaged in too many cases by property. They are inclined to excessive mistrust and suspicion, but, strangely enough, although they are afraid to trust their money to the Government savings bank or to invest it in sound industrial enterprises, they are always ready to entrust it to any swindling company promoter who promises them ten per cent.; that is the secret of the invari-

able success of wild-cat company promoting in France. It is the inevitable nemesis of excessive suspicion.

But, whatever their faults may be, there is something very attractive about the French peasants. I have come into close contact with them during several stays of considerable length in country districts, and the more I know them the better I like them. They have many great qualities, conspicuous among which is their sound good sense in most matters. Their sense of realities is refreshing. A serious illness compelled me to spend three months in Touraine in 1916, and I saw a great deal of the peasants. Naturally, like everybody else, they talked about the war, and I used to let them talk without expressing my opinions. It was amusing to notice how they always began with the usual patriotic *clichés*, and only when they got to know one better said what they really thought, which was that no result of the war could ever make it worth while. Perhaps their point of view was rather materialist, even *terre-à-terre*, but I found that point of view refreshing after the surfeit of idealism to which we were being treated by way of justifying wholesale slaughter. The peasants, not being ideologists, were less indifferent to the massacre of young men than most of the bourgeoisie—especially the women and old men—seemed to be; they knew that the death of a young man is a monstrosity the horror of which is not diminished by any religious or patriotic sophism. Not once have I heard a peasant say that a man killed in the war was better off or that he was happy to die for his country. They often said that the war ought to be stopped, but they never thought of revolting against it; they accepted it with the patient endurance with which they accept

their daily toil and the buffets of Nature. But a very large proportion of them refused to subscribe to the war loans because their sons at the Front wrote to them that they would be prolonging the war if they did so, and they themselves recognised the justice of the argument. I was told by a sub-prefect that not a penny had been subscribed to a particular war loan by the peasants in his administrative area. The French peasants have always been on the side of peace. The Chauvinism of France in the nineteenth century was really the Chauvinism of Paris, which was always able to control the country by means of the centralised administration. The peasants voted for Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte in 1848 because they believed that he was in favour of peace and were afraid of the bellicose tendencies of the Parisian democracy; when their hopes were deceived by the policy of Napoleon III, they turned against the Empire, and in 1871 they again voted for peace against the Parisian democracy. They care very little about politics, and are always disposed to support the existing regime provided that it gives them peace and leaves them alone to attend to their own affairs. Since the Third Republic had done that up to 1914 they were Republicans to a man; even in Brittany, where the majority of the peasants vote Royalist, they do so chiefly by tradition, and would turn round at once if they thought that the Royalist cause had the smallest chance of success. The great majority of the peasants are not religious, even though they may go to Mass or at least use the church for baptisms, first communions, marriages and burials; at heart they are Rationalists, but they have often a considerable element of superstition, much of it pre-Christian. Even the external practice of religion is rapidly declining in the rural

districts and the proportion of avowed Free-thinkers is steadily increasing. It is naturally in the most prosperous districts that the intelligence of the peasants is highest; their lives are less hard, and they are not so constantly preoccupied by the problem of existence. Life is easiest and happiest in the wine-growing districts. With an economic system that will remove the necessity of thrift and methods that will reduce the present excessive labour and give more leisure, the agricultural population of France will be able to develop to the full its great qualities and will be an invaluable factor in the life of the nation. One almost hesitates to hope for it more education, for, after the experience of the war, one begins to doubt whether higher education is really an advantage, at any rate as it is at present understood. For the intellectuals, instead of showing an example of reasonableness to the others, have been, as a rule, the worst of all. No peasant has talked such nonsense as has been talked and written by distinguished philosophers, eminent men of science, learned professors, and members of the French Academy.

As I have said, the chief hope of France at present seems to me to lie in the proletariat, the one class that has escaped from the demoralising influence of property. I learned to know the Parisian proletariat as I never had known it before during those terrible weeks of 1914 before the battle of the Marne. When Paris was threatened I sent my family away and went to live temporarily in a popular quarter. The bourgeois quarter in which I lived was entirely deserted except by the concierges and had become intolerable and also very inconvenient, all the ordinary means of communication having been suspended. In those days the sense of common danger drew together those who

had remained in Paris, and we became almost like one large family. Perfect strangers spoke to one another in the street; formality and convention disappeared. I was thus brought into close contact with the proletariat and I shall never, so long as I live, forget their admirable attitude in those days of tension. It was one of stoic calm. Some of the few bourgeois that had not gone to Bordeaux or elsewhere were talking wildly of burning Paris rather than allow it to fall into the hands of the Germans, of defending the streets inch by inch, and so on. I never once heard rodomontade of that sort from the mouth of a man or woman of the proletariat. They were intensely pessimistic and convinced that Paris would almost certainly be occupied by the Germans. They felt that they had been deserted by the Government, which in fact went away much earlier than was necessary, but they simply accepted the situation and made the best of it. And all their best qualities came out. In the few days before the flight to Bordeaux there was an atmosphere of nervosity and suspicion. After the lying *communiqués* which had concealed the French defeats and made the public believe that the French Army was still resisting successfully near the frontier, the sudden announcement that the Germans were close to Amiens caused a momentary panic. The wildest rumours circulated through Paris—stories of Generals being shot for treason and every kind of improbable fiction. All this went away with the Government and the bourgeoisie, and the people of Paris became perfectly calm.

The French proletariat has always been greatly influenced by ideas. During the first half of the nineteenth century it was the later revolutionary idea of wars for democracy, of a crusade to set up

democracy all over Europe by force of arms. That idea is now dead; if any remnant of it lingered, experience of the latest war for democracy has killed it. Its place has been taken by the idea of Internationalism. Throughout the war, in spite of the defection of many leaders, that idea has been maintained and peace finds it stronger than ever. All the organisations of the proletariat protested unanimously and at once against peace terms which belied the professions of the Allied Governments during the war. Never since the Revolution has the revolutionary spirit died out in the French proletariat, in which there is more disinterested devotion to a cause than in any other class. Whenever the Third Republic has been threatened, it is the proletariat that has saved it, not because it satisfied its aspirations, but because it was, at any rate, a step towards democracy. The level of intelligence in the proletariat is high; there is a great respect for intellect and a growing desire for knowledge. There is nothing of which the French Socialist workman is more proud than the fact that Anatole France is a "comrade"—in other words, a member of the Socialist Party. Nevertheless, there is in the proletariat a bitter hatred of the bourgeoisie which is shared by all that is best in the bourgeoisie itself. This is natural, for the French proletariat, a minority in a country of property owners, has been the Cinderella of France. There are men of remarkable ability in the Socialist Party and the Trade Unions. Jaurès, who was the son of a peasant, was the greatest statesman of the Third Republic, if not of contemporary Europe. It would be invidious to mention the living by name; I am proud to count among my friends some of the leaders of French Socialism and Trade Unionism, and I have had the opportunity of

appreciating their qualities. There are among them many cool heads and dispassionate judgments. Without a knowledge of the proletariat one cannot know the true France.

In the bourgeoisie there is still a strong phalanx of intellectuals that have not succumbed to the madness of the war. Side by side with Anatole France stand younger writers, such as Henri Barbusse, ready to join with the proletariat in the struggle for freedom. They have many supporters in the professional, literary, and artistic classes and even here and there in other sections of the bourgeoisie. Those of the lower bourgeoisie that live wholly or mainly on their earnings are beginning to discover that their interests are more closely allied to those of the proletariat than to those of the capitalist class. Hence the remarkable movement among them towards Trade Unionism. The minor Government employees and the elementary teachers are among the most revolutionary classes in France and have successfully asserted their right to organise.

Such are the respective situations of the various classes in France at this moment, when the greatest struggle that the country has ever known since the Revolution seems to be impending—a struggle to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie, which has been the ruling class for more than a century.

CHAPTER VII

SOCIALISM, SYNDICALISM, AND STATE CAPITALISM

"State Capitalism (Etatisme) is the organisation of the labour of the community by the State, the Government. Socialism is the organisation of the labour of the community by the workers grouped in statutory associations (*associations de droit public*)."—EMILE VANDERVELDE.

EVEN more than other countries France is in need of Socialism, for the power of money and the love of money are effects of which the cause is the private ownership of the means of production; the effects can be got rid of only by suppressing the cause. France has also need of Socialism to enable her to fulfil her mission in the world. The qualities of the French people do not fit them to become a great industrial nation; they have the money-saving but not the money-making capacity. Even if their business methods were modernised, as they should be in any case, they would never hold their own in the industrial struggle with countries like England, Germany, and the United States. Further, if international arrangements remain unaltered, France will inevitably sink to the rank of a second-class Power, by reason of her terrible losses in the war, from which she has suffered more than any other country. She is now adding to a colonial empire already inflated beyond her strength and to a great extent unprofitable on

account of her colonial policy. This policy of reckless expansion is likely to prove ruinous to a country bled white by the war and faced with appalling financial problems. If the burden of armaments is to continue—and it must continue unless there be a radical change of policy—it is hard to see how France can ever recover herself. The salvation of France would be in a system of international Socialism which would, on the one hand, free every country from the risk of aggression, and, on the other, by suppressing economic frontiers, enable every country to lead the life and practise the forms of production best suited to its natural conditions and to the characteristics of its inhabitants. France would then have no need to keep up an army and navy, to aim at becoming a great industrial country, or to seek for more and more territorial possessions in order to provide markets for protected industries. She could devote herself to the development of her natural resources, which will provide her with ample wealth, to the production of works of art and objects of luxury, which has always been her principal industry, and to the pursuit of her intellectual mission, which is in danger of being stifled in present conditions. France has often been called the modern Athens; she should remember that Athens fell through a desire for conquest and expansion.

But there is more than one kind of Socialism, or rather there is more than one way of organising a Socialist society. It might be a system of State monopolies administered by a highly centralised bureaucracy with industrial conscription and every citizen in the receipt of the same salary from the State. Such a system is not likely to be adopted in France. The French people has had too bitter an experience of bureaucracy and State monopolies

to wish to extend them; indeed, it is the identification of Socialism with bureaucracy and State monopolies that has led so many advanced thinkers and revolutionaries in France to reject it. This is the "reformist" conception of Socialism, of which M. Millerand was once the apostle, which seeks to solve the social problem by gradually bringing production under the control of the State. We know that theory in England: one begins with municipal gas and water supplies, goes on to the nationalisation of mines and railways, and then the State takes over one industry after the other until at last we wake up one fine morning to find that we are living in a Socialist community without having suspected it. This theory, which is really étatiste rather than Socialist, is very much discounted in France at present, and French Socialism is becoming more and more anti-étatiste, that is to say, is returning to the conceptions of Marx and Engels, who declared it to be the object of Socialism to abolish the State and to substitute for it the "free federation of all men." They were not thereby advocating anarchism, but merely the suppression of authority in favour of organisation. At its national congress in April 1919, the French Socialist Party definitely pronounced itself in favour of revolutionary Socialism to be attained by the dictatorship of the proletariat, as against the reformist theory. The great majority of the party decided to support reforms so long as the capitalist system continues, but that is quite a different matter from the reformist conception; the reforms are advocated as palliatives of existing conditions, not as steps towards Socialism, and they by no means necessarily consist in an increase of State monopolies. Many French Socialists are opposed to all State monopolies in present conditions.

M. Emile Vandervelde, without sharing their opinion, inclines to the system of autonomous administration with representatives of the workmen for such State monopolies as may be desirable.[1] One of the strongest objections to State monopolies is, of course, the claim that the employees of the State cannot be allowed to strike. In a country with conscription, the Government has the power to break any strike in a public service by mobilising the employees, as M. Briand broke the French railway strike in 1910. In that case the only alternative to submission is mutiny, that is to say, revolution. It is not at all certain that even a Socialist State would allow its employees to strike, and a system of State Socialism, which is more accurately called State Capitalism, would make the workers the slaves of a bureaucracy. To such a system French Trade Unionism is unanimously opposed, and nearly all French Socialists agree with M. Jules Guesde that "the nationalisation of private industries by the bourgeois State is not Socialism, has nothing to do with Socialism," and does not simplify the task of Socialism, but rather the contrary. For Socialism involves the entire abolition of the wage system and the management of industry by the workers. "Etatisme," says M. Vandervelde, "is the organisation of the labour of the community by the State, the Government. Socialism is the organisation of the labour of the community by the workers grouped in statutory associations (*associations de droit public*)."[2] And, as M. Vandervelde adds, the former of these systems does not necessarily involve any change in the relations of the classes.

The objection to Etatisme in France is not, how-

[1] "Le Socialisme contre l'Etat," Chapters II–IV.
[2] *Op cit*, p. 164.

ever, based merely on theoretical considerations; it is, as I have said, the result of bitter experience. For the French public services, whether partially or wholly under the control of the State, are lamentably inefficient, and as for the State monopolies, they are a curse to the country. The railways are not a State monopoly; the permanent ways belong to the State, but only one system is directly worked by it, the others being conceded to private companies for a term of years, at the end of which they revert to the State, which has then the choice of either renewing the concessions or taking over the systems at a valuation.[1] So far as the railways are concerned, the State, therefore, is in competition with private companies, but there is very little railway competition in France, the lines having been laid down in such a way as to avoid overlapping as much as possible; there are few places between which there is more than one route. The system directly worked by the State was considerably enlarged in 1910 by the purchase of the Western Railway of France before the period of its concession had expired. This purchase was, as has been said, opposed by Jules Guesde and a certain number of strict Marxists, but it was supported by Jaurès and the majority of the Socialist Parliamentary

[1] The concessions last from forty to fifty years Most of them were renewed in 1883 and the conventions made with the railway companies by M Reynial on November 20, 1883, now regulate their relations with the State The State repays to the companies by annuities the cost of construction, less £1,000 a kilomètre, and the cost of rolling stock. It also guarantees the shareholders a minimum dividend of four per cent This "garantie d'intérêts" dates from the Second Empire when the great railway companies were formed, if a railway be worked at a loss, as has often happened, it involves a heavy expense to the State The land occupied by the railways belongs to the companies

Party. It was an extremely bad bargain for the State, which paid the shareholders of the railway company several times the market value of their property. The Western Railway, which was the oldest in France, had for years been a byeword. The slowness of its trains and their unpunctuality were notorious, and, not long before its purchase by the State, the passengers of a morning suburban train into Paris were so exasperated at having been kept waiting half an hour or more outside St. Lazare station—an almost daily occurrence—that they wrecked the station as a protest when they at last arrived there. As the purchase of the Western Railway had been proposed and discussed for some years before it was actually accomplished, and as in any case the concession had not many years to run, the directors had spent as little money as they possibly could and even necessary repairs had been neglected. The permanent way was in so disgraceful a condition that it was hardly safe to travel on it at a rate so fast as forty miles an hour and it has since had to be entirely relaid; the stations were beginning to fall to ruin, and the rolling stock was only fit to be scrapped. Such was the condition of the engines that they were constantly breaking down, especially as, for reasons of economy, the trains were usually too long and heavy for a single engine. The boat-train between Paris and Dieppe rarely got through without a breakdown, which meant the delay of an hour or so. It was for this worthless property that the State paid an enormous sum, which made the purchase a godsend to the shareholders. The purchase of the Western Railway by the State was almost a necessity, since it was becoming a public danger, but the price paid was a public scandal. The capital expenditure involved by the necessity of relaying

the permanent way, rebuilding the stations, replacing the rolling stock, and generally making the system workable, will in the end, with the purchase money, amount to more than it would have cost to construct and equip a new railway, and the Western Railway must for many years be run at a heavy loss to the taxpayers. It is too soon to form an opinion about the State administration of the Western Railway, for the five years of war have put a stop to the work of transformation, the manufacture of new rolling stock, etc., and, like all other French railways, the Western Railway has a great deal of leeway to make up, but in the four years between the purchase and the outbreak of the war there was a great improvement on the previous management and there can be no doubt that it will be continued. But the comparison has to be made, not with the old Western Railway, which was the worst in France, but with the other great private railway companies. It cannot be said that the old State Railway was in any way superior to the P.L.M., the Eastern Railway, or the Northern Railway; indeed the latter had better train services. The one advantage of the old State Railway was that it ran third class carriages on all the trains, whereas on the other lines express trains are almost invariably first and second class, or even first class only. After the purchase of the Western Railway the practice of having no third class on express trains was, however, continued until the war, since when there have been no express trains.

The State exercises much more control over the railways belonging to private companies than was the case in England before the war—naturally so, since it subsidises them. The State, for instance, fixes the railway fares and the time-

tables have to be submitted to the Government, which has the power to revise them and to insist on more trains being run. But this control is not exercised to any great extent to the advantage of the public. The fares are, it is true, lower than in England, the third class rate before the war having been about four-fifths of a penny a mile, the second class not quite half as much again, and the first class fares double the third class. At present the pre-war fares are increased 25 per cent. But third class passengers almost always have to travel by slow trains, so that people with small incomes are often obliged to travel second class. This is a monstrous state of affairs in a republican country; if French railway companies have not the sense to recognise, as the English companies have, that it would pay them to cater for third class passengers, the Government of the Republic ought to use its powers to make them do so. People to whom, for business or other reasons, time is of importance are often obliged to travel first class; for instance, the only train by which it is possible to reach Marseilles from Paris within the day is first class only. Moreover, a long journey in a third class carriage in France is a painful experience; most of the third class carriages have no cushions at all and many of them are little better than cattle-trucks. Except on a very few big express trains, the second class and often even the first class carriages are not so comfortable as the third class on English railways; a third class dining car is unknown in France. The railway carriages, as well as being uncomfortable, are often in bad condition and usually dirty. The "trains de luxe," which run in normal times between France and other countries, are not at all luxurious, and give no value for the heavy charge that is made in

addition to the first class fare. They consist as a rule merely of sleeping cars and a dining car; a sleeping car in the daytime is less comfortable than an ordinary first class carriage. The charge for sleeping accommodation on most of the French railways is very high; between Paris and Marseilles, for instance, it is forty francs (32s.), in addition to the first class fare. On the whole, the French railways, although better than the Italian, are inferior in every way to those of England, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, and several other countries, and the State Railway is not the best of them. Railways, being of the nature of a natural monopoly, seem particularly adapted to State ownership, but, if they are owned by the State, they should, like the Swiss railways, be under autonomous management, responsible to the Government, but independent of the bureaucracy, and the workers should, as is not the case in Switzerland, be represented on the managing bodies.

The tramway and omnibus services in France are not as a rule public monopolies; in Paris they are in the hands of private companies which have concessions from the municipality. But they, like the railways, are more under the control of the bureaucracy than the English services of the same kind, to which they are much inferior. In Paris the services, except on one or two lines of tramway, are not nearly as frequent as they ought to be, with the result that many of the lines do not pay; when they do not pay, the service is often reduced, with the result that the loss becomes greater than ever. When the concession for the Paris tramways last expired, an offer for it was made by an American syndicate, which, unfortunately for Paris, did not obtain it. The representative of the syndicate undertook, if he obtained the concession,

to provide a much more frequent service and explained to the representatives of the Municipal Council of Paris that it would pay to do so; if, he said, it was found that a line did not pay with trams running every five minutes, the way to make it pay was to run them every two minutes. He was, of course, right; people in Paris get so disgusted with waiting for a tram or an omnibus, with the prospect of not being able to find a place in it when it at last arrives, that they take a cab if they can possibly afford it. On the Passy-Bourse line of motor 'buses before the war it was almost impossible to get a seat at the stopping-place nearest to my home, and I have often waited a quarter of an hour in vain; the reason was that the 'buses ran only about every five minutes and the service was quite insufficient. For motives of economy even in normal times two tramcars are run together on many lines, and, as the motor is only sufficiently powerful to draw a single car, the pace is much reduced and breakdowns are frequent. The deficiencies of all these public services are the result of the penny wise and pound foolish policy —the pettifogging *petit bourgeois* spirit—which does so much harm in private business.

That policy and that spirit are just as evident in the postal service, which is lamentably inefficient. There are not enough post offices in Paris or in any large town, and, while useless officials are multiplied elsewhere, the post offices are insufficiently staffed. Paris has a complete system of pneumatic tubes for the transmission of express letters—hence known as "pneumatiques"—from one post office to another. The "pneumatiques" are handed over the counter at a post office or else put in special letter boxes supposed to be cleared every quarter of an hour. If there were no delay in their despatch

or delivery they would reach their destination in a very short time, and in fact fifteen years ago one could count on the delivery of a "pneumatique" in three-quarters of an hour. As time went on, however, the use of this convenient method of correspondence enormously increased, but little or no increase was made in the number of messengers, with the result that there is now a long delay before delivery, and in the last year before the war a "pneumatique" already took from two to three hours in transmission, that is to say, about the time taken by an ordinary letter in London. Even then it was quicker than a telegram, which I have known to take five or six hours in peace time to go from one part of Paris to another. Letters also are slow, their delivery is irregular, and they are lost more often than they ought to be. As for the telephone service, it is even worse in France than in England, where, by the way, it has not improved since it was taken over by the State. The postal service is hardly one to be left in private hands, but my experience is that the American cable companies are more efficient and give better facilities than any State telegraph service, probably because of the competition between them, and I see no reason why the carrying of letters should be a monopoly.[1] The defects of the French post office

[1] The war has shown us in England that even so apparently harmless a State monopoly as that of letter-carrying may be insidiously exploited against individual liberty, for we have learned that letters have been secretly opened by a *Cabinet Noir* in such a way as to prevent the fact from being detected. This system, once begun, is likely to be continued, for it is undoubtedly useful to the police and may help in the detection of crime, but it is better that crime should be undetected than that the private correspondence of every citizen should be at the mercy of policemen The system has always existed in France, and that is one of the reasons why the French State so jealously guards its monopoly and will not even allow a

administration are universally recognised in France and are the subject of bitter complaints, but nothing can move the inert mass of officialdom and matters grow worse rather than better. The remedy is no doubt autonomous administration; there must be a complete separation between the organ of government and the organs of administration. It is only just to say that there are certain postal facilities in France that might well be adopted in England: the money order post card or letter card is much the most convenient method of transmitting money by post; the telephone message is also very convenient and is now the most rapid method of communication in Paris, and the letter-telegram is cheap and very useful.[1]

If the State in France is inefficient and incompetent in such matters as the railways and the postal service, it is even more so when it tries its hand at production. The State monopolies in tobacco and matches could hardly be equalled as object lessons of the pernicious results of a bureaucratic State Capitalism, and have done more than anything else to inspire the French people with a horror of the State management of industry. Every visitor to France knows that French matches are

District Messenger Service in Paris The monopoly of letter-carrying is in itself an unnecessary infringement of liberty; if the State can do it better than anybody else, as it probably can, why should it fear competition?

[1] Money sent by a money order post card or letter card is paid to the addressee by the postman who delivers the card. A telephone message is a message telephoned to the post office nearest to the address of the person for whom it is intended, and thence sent out by telegraph messenger; it cost fifty centimes in Paris before the war, and now costs seventy-five. A letter-telegram is a letter dispatched by telegraph after 9 p m. to any telegraph office that is still open, and delivered by the first post in the morning; it costs only one franc for every hundred words, and enables a letter to be dispatched at midnight from Paris to Marseilles, for instance, and delivered by the first post.

the worst and the dearest in the world; one might be reconciled to paying a penny (three halfpence since the war) for sixty common wooden matches such as were sold in England before the war for twopence or threepence a dozen boxes, if only the matches would strike, but half of them usually fail to do so. The tobacco monopoly is conducted in defiance of the elementary dictates of good sense, and tobacco in every form is much dearer than it would be if its production were in private hands. These monopolies are, of course, used principally as methods of obtaining revenue; the supporters of a State-Socialist system say that that would not be the case under such a system, and that therefore it cannot be judged by these examples. It is true that, if the main object of the French State were not to fleece the consumer, it could provide good matches and good tobacco at reasonable prices, but there are other evils in State monopoly which would not be got rid of even if revenue were not the first aim. The tobacco manufactured by the French Government is all grown on French territory, and is therefore all of one kind. For my part I prefer it to any other, and habitually smoke "Caporal" cigarettes when I can get them, but there are many people that prefer Oriental or Virginian tobacco. Yet the State obstinately refuses to provide for the taste of such people by manufacturing Turkish, Egyptian, or Virginian cigarettes; before the war it had a contract with the Ottoman Régie, which has the tobacco monopoly in Turkey, and imported its cigarettes, but they were very dear. Other cigarettes are imported from England, Egypt and America, but as the import duty is enormous, their prices are prohibitive; common Virginian cigarettes cost something like eight shillings a hundred even before the war

and are now much dearer. Havana cigars are also imported and are naturally dear; some of the cheap cigars made in France are just smokable. As for pipe tobacco, it is impossible to get any kind except the French. No private person is allowed to import tobacco in any form except by special permission from the Director of Customs; the permission involves elaborate formalities and the maximum amount that any single person may import in one year is a kilogramme (about 2 lb. 3 oz.). As the importer had, even before the war, to pay duty at the rate of nearly 30*s*. a lb., the permission is rarely demanded. The whole policy of the State is to force the consumer to buy French tobacco, whether he likes it or not. This is not all: if the Government happens to have large stocks of some particular brand of tobacco or cigarettes to be worked off, it refuses to supply the tobacconists, who are all State officials, with other kinds, so that smokers cannot even get the particular kind of French tobacco to which they are accustomed. There is yet another grave abuse. Legally only the tobacconists appointed by the Government can sell tobacco retail in any form, but it is of course impossible to prevent restaurants and cafés from supplying their customers and the Government winks at their doing so. As they are obliged to obtain their supplies at the tobacconist's and pay the ordinary prices, they put on a profit and are not content with a small one; some of them charge two or three times the legal price and the public is fleeced more than ever. There are constant protests in the Press against this illegality, which could easily be stopped by legalising the sale in restaurants and cafés, allowing them a discount and forcing them to sell at the legal prices or even a little more; but that would interfere with the

precious monopoly of the tobacconists, so nothing is done. In France it is always the consumer who is sacrificed.

During the war the abuses in connection with the sale of tobacco became scandalous and illegal profiteering became general. It was almost impossible to obtain cigars, cigarettes, or tobacco at a tobacco shop, but they were to be had at restaurants or cafés, and even from private individuals, at prices several times as high as those at which they could legally be sold. The Government made no attempt to stop these illegal practices, and smokers who could not afford the fancy prices demanded by the profiteers had to go without tobacco or stand in a queue once a week outside a tobacco shop to get half an ounce of tobacco or a packet of ten cigarettes. Yet it is said that the production of the State factories was greater during the war than in normal times. Such are the blessings of State monopoly.

Pawnbroking in France is a municipal monopoly, and there is something to be said for making it one. The interest charged is no lower than in England, and the proportion of the value of an article lent on it is usually not so high, but at least the business is honestly conducted and the valuations are just. Moreover, an article deposited at the "Mont de Piété" can never be sold so long as the owner continues to pay the annual interest on the sum lent, but the owner can at any time ask for it to be sold by auction, in which case he receives the balance of the price that it fetches, after repayment of principal and interest. Should the article be sold in default of payment of interest, the owner can also claim the balance. In fact, the "Mont de Piété" is not run for profit, and this is an enormous advantage; indeed, the strongest opponents of State mono-

polies can admit that pawnbroking is one of the very few businesses which ought to be run by the State. During the war the advantage was greater than ever, for the sale of articles for non-payment of interest was entirely suspended and the suspension has not yet been removed. Articles pawned five years ago, on which no interest has been paid, can still be redeemed on payment of the arrears of interest. But even here the doctrine that the State or a public body must never take any risk causes an absurd anomaly. The "Mont de Piété" will not accept any work of art such as a painting or a piece of sculpture, and on other objects that have a special artistic or collecting value will allow only the intrinsic value. For instance, a piece of valuable old silver is valued at the current rate of silver and an old tapestry or a Persian carpet is valued as if it were modern. The result is a system of illicit and illegal pawning at which the State is obliged to wink, for the owner of a valuable picture or tapestry cannot reasonably be prevented from borrowing money on it. This facilitates the disposal of stolen works of art, for the lender of money on a work of art will never give any information, because he has acted illegally, and the police have no means of giving warning of the theft of works of art to persons likely to lend money on them, or of tracing them if they are pawned. The consequence is that, nothing being easier than to dispose of a stolen work of art without detection, persons to whom works of art have been entrusted by their owners for sale have a much greater temptation to pawn them than in England and often yield to it. There are various devices for lending money on articles without technically infringing the law, such as a sale under a contract giving the seller the right to buy back the article at a certain price within a

given time. If the State undertakes pawnbroking—and I have given the reasons why it is desirable that it should do so—it should not make restrictions of this kind. It may safely be said that private pawnbrokers in England, who lend money on pictures, do not take much risk; they employ expert valuers and leave a large margin for depreciation. The State could do the same.[1] If the doctrine that the State can take no risk were applied to industry in general, the consequences of State monopoly would indeed be appalling.

It may be, as I have said, that a Socialist State owning the means of production would manage its monopolies better than the State monopolies are managed in France, but they would never be really satisfactory. Most of the vices that are so patent in the working of French monopolies are inherent in monopoly itself and would never be eradicated in any economic conditions. The owner of a monopoly has the consumers at his mercy; he can force them to buy what he likes, not what they like, and impose upon them goods of an inferior quality. He will abuse his power as inevitably as an absolute ruler abuses it; monopoly is economic despotism and is as bad as any form of despotism. Enlightened and benevolent despotism might be the best form of government if it were possible to find an enlightened and benevolent despot, but it is not, for the necessary qualification for such a position is intellectual and moral perfection. Even if a man could be found combining in himself the genius of Napoleon and Pericles with the unselfishness and disinterestedness of St. Francis of Assisi, he would

[1] If the State declines to take any risk, it should legalise private pawnbroking in the objects on which it refuses to lend money, or even general private pawnbroking under proper regulations in competition with itself.

be demoralised by the exercise of arbitrary power. And arbitrary power is just as demoralising in economic as in political matters. A Socialist State would be just as much inclined as a capitalist State to impose home products on the consumer—perhaps even more so, since it would be more directly interested in discouraging the purchase of imported products. A State with the monopoly of production might even try to make the consumer buy what it believed to be good for him rather than what he himself wanted; indeed that tendency has already manifested itself in the prohibition of alcoholic drinks in the United States, where there is a movement to prohibit the manufacture and sale of tobacco. Human nature being what it is, a system of State Socialism monopolising the whole of production would inevitably end in a slavery more galling, even if less pernicious, than the economic slavery produced by the present capitalist system, because its manifestations would be more evident to everybody. Our lives would be regulated by an omnipotent bureaucracy which would decide what and how much we were to eat and drink, how we should dress ourselves, what sort of houses we should live in and how they should be furnished. We should all be called at the same time in the morning by a sanitary official who would deposit at our door a sanitary breakfast, and we should go at the same hour to a sanitary factory or workshop and take our lunch in a sanitary restaurant where the menu would be arranged on strict sanitary principles. The belief that abuses of bureaucracy and State monopoly could be checked by democracy is illusory; we know by experience that parliaments have no effective control over the bureaucracy even now when the action of the bureaucracy is restricted to a

comparatively limited field. If the whole of production were put under the control of the bureaucracy, it would be impossible to devise any means of keeping it in check. No elected body, still less the general public, could keep an eye on the innumerable and intricate details of the production and distribution of a whole nation; even if the elected bodies sat continuously all the year round for twelve hours a day, they would not have the time to deal with the matter. Moreover, the members of the Administration would always defend the bureaucrats and make out a good case for them by tendencious information which it would be very difficult to control. Probably the people would sooner or later rebel and the result would be a disastrous reaction and the complete discredit of Socialism.

Another inherent vice of State monopoly is that it removes the economic incentive to individual industry and efficiency. The bureaucrats that manage a State monopoly know that it will make no difference to them whether they manage it ill or well, whether the returns are small or large, whether the quality of the products is good or bad. The managers of the French match monopoly have no interest in providing the public with good matches; the public is obliged to buy the bad ones because it can get no others. A private manufacturer with no monopoly who persisted in supplying such matches at such a price would have to close down his factory in a few months. The managers of the French tobacco monopoly have no interest in improving the quality of the goods that they supply or in searching for new methods or new brands; the consumer is at their mercy and no amount of energy, initiative, or resource would better their own position. There is no reason for supposing that

a Socialist bureaucracy would be any better than any other. Minerals, like land, are a natural monopoly, for they cannot be manufactured and their quantity is limited; that being so, it is desirable that the monopoly should be public and not private, but it should be under autonomous management, in which the workers should have a voice.[1] But in ordinary production competition is necessary and Socialism cannot dispense with it; it can only alter its character. Nor can Socialism dispense with the economic incentive; if all citizens were paid the same income, no matter what they did or whether they did anything, it would be impossible to find anybody to do the disagreeable or routine work and industrial conscription, that is to say, forced labour, would become inevitable. Forced labour is slavery. It is hardly worth while to revolutionise the whole social system in order that the wage-slaves of the capitalists may become the wage-slaves of a bureaucracy. A Socialist community will get the disagreeable work done by paying extra for it. There is no objection from the Socialist point of view to a certain inequality of income; what is objectionable in the present system is not so much the fact that one man has a larger income than another as the power that is given to certain individuals by the ownership of the means of production to force the community to pay tribute to them and to their descendants for ever. Once that power is abolished by the socialisation of the means of production, one man may earn more than another without any injurious results, and it will always be

[1] An excellent system has been proposed by Mr. Robert Smillie for the management of the English mines under national ownership by representatives of the community, the experts and the workmen

essential to efficiency that the amount of a man's earnings should to some extent depend on the quality of his work—all the more essential in a society which will guarantee to every worker the minimum necessary for a decent livelihood. The most valuable work in the world always has been and always will be done for its own sake, not for the sake of gain, and even under a system of State Socialism with equal incomes for everybody there would be no lack of poets, artists, inventors or men of science. But the ordinary work of production would suffer, for it is just that work which needs the economic incentive, especially if it be, as it often must be, monotonous or even disagreeable.

It is because all this is beginning to be recognised in France that there is in the proletariat and among Socialists so strong a reaction against Etatisme. That reaction began to find expression at the end of the last century in the Syndicalist theory propounded by the leaders of French Trade Unionism. This theory is to be found in germ in the pamphlet of M. Sorel, "L'Avenir Socialiste des Syndicats," published in 1898. It is that production should be entirely in the hands of the respective Trade Unions ("Syndicats")—that the railways should belong to the railway workers, the mines to the miners, and so on. The duty of the proletariat, M. Sorel maintained, was to destroy entirely the existing political organisation and to deprive the State and the local authorities of all their functions, one after the other, in order to transfer them to the Trade Unions; "the future of Socialism," he said, "consists in the autonomous development of the Trade Unions." M. Sorel maintained that the Syndicalist theory was a logical deduction from the principles of Karl Marx, and there is no doubt

that it has more affinity with those principles than has the theory of a bureaucratic State Socialism, for it aims at " the free federation of all men "; but Marx would not have denied all control over production to the community as a whole, as do the Syndicalists. Before M. Sorel published this pamphlet there were already Trade Unionists in France hostile to parliamentary methods and opposed to the Socialist Party which had been founded by Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue, but Sorel was the first to formulate a definite Syndicalist theory. Syndicalism has much in common with the theories of Proudhon and Bakounine. The General Confederation of Labour, commonly known as the C.G.T., was founded in 1895, but at first it had few adherents and its tendencies were not strictly defined. French Trade Unions, however, were from the first revolutionary in their character; they aimed not merely at improving the condition of the workers by raising wages, reducing hours of labour, and so on, but at a radical change in the whole economic system. From the first also the French Trade Unionists were suspicious of parliamentary action and relied on economic methods such as the strike. At the National Congress of the Socialist Party held at St. Mandé in 1896, M. Millerand propounded a programme of State Socialist reforms which was accepted by what came to be called the " reformist " section of the Socialists as distinguished from the definitely revolutionary section led by Jules Guesde. This widened the breach between the Trade Unionists and the Socialists and the difference between them became acute in 1899, when M. Millerand, with the approval of the majority of the Socialist Party, accepted office in the Waldeck-Rousseau Cabinet. A coalition of Guesdists, Anarchists, Blanquists and

other "anti-étatistes" was formed, which became the predominant influence in the General Confederation of Labour. At its congress held at Amiens in 1906 the Confederation by an overwhelming majority definitely repudiated parliamentary methods, adopted the Syndicalist theory, and approved of the general strike as the method of achieving the social revolution. From that time until the outbreak of the war there was a conflict between the Socialists and the Syndicalists, which sometimes became very bitter and which divided the proletariat; some of the Syndicalists attacked the parliamentary Socialists more violently than the bourgeois. Lagardelle, Pouget, Griffuelhes, Sorel and others published in 1907 and 1908 pamphlets in which they set forth the Syndicalist theories, attacked "democratism" and even the principles of Marx, and preached "direct action." Whereas Sorel in 1898 had departed very little from the doctrines of Marx and Engels, the Syndicalists now became definitely anarchist or "libertaire."

In saying that the Syndicalists were anarchist I do not mean that they necessarily advocated violence or preached the use of bombs and assassination; they were anarchist in the sense that they objected to all government, but, in fact, they were not so far from Marx and Engels as some of them imagined, for they admitted the necessity of organisation, that is to say, administration. Their quarrel with revolutionary Socialists in this regard was little more than verbal; both wanted to substitute the administration of things for the government of men. The real difference between the Socialists and the Syndicalists was that the latter would entrust administration entirely to the Trade Unions or Syndicates of workers in each trade, and left

no room for any control by the community as a whole. The term "libertaire" is really more accurate than "anarchist" as applied to the Syndicalists, and the best English equivalent for "libertaire" is "liberal"—not "Liberal," which means a member of a particular political party. Liberalism, in the true sense of the term, is essentially and always anti-étatiste. Syndicalism is non-parliamentary, non-religious, and non-patriotic. The leading Syndicalists were not, of course, individualist anarchists but communist-anarchists, which is only another name for liberal Socialists as opposed to State Socialists; the term "communism" is used in France in the sense of "collectivism," as it was by Marx and Engels, and as it is in Russia. There was in the Syndicalist ranks a small group of individualist anarchists, which had its centre in M. Gustave Hervé's paper, *La Guerre Sociale.* M. Hervé himself was a member of the Socialist Party, but his theories at that time were more anarchist than socialist and he was extremely anti-patriotic. But he never had clear ideas on any subject and his character is admirably summed up in the remark of a friend, who once said to him: "Tu dis toujours ce que tu penses, mon ami, mais tu ne penses pas" (You always say what you think, my friend, but you don't think). Inconsequent, impulsive, and inordinately vain, M. Hervé aimed above all at being conspicuous, and his subsequent conversion to ultra-patriotic Nationalism was not at all surprising; I prophesied it more than ten years ago. M. Hervé himself has always been disinterested in money matters and the desire of gain has never been a factor in his political development; he is a man of simple tastes who can do with very little money But that was not the case with all the

members of the group that gathered round him, on whom his erratic and capricious character had a very bad influence; he gave them a love of violent language often with little meaning and under his guidance they acquired the habit of speaking without thinking. Most of them drifted into individualist anarchism and thence, sooner or later, into ordinary criminality. The doctrine of "individual expropriation" easily became the excuse for theft and even burglary, and false coining was adopted as a revolutionary method, at first on the pretext of providing money for the "cause," but before long for less disinterested motives. During a certain period the *Guerre Sociale* lived chiefly on the proceeds of coining; I do not know that M. Hervé was aware of the fact, but he probably made as little inquiry into the sources of the funds as did M. Cardinal into the sources of his income. The exploits of Bonnot and Garnier, who had begun as individualist anarchists and degenerated into criminals, certainly not of an ordinary type, discredited individualist anarchism. Nearly all the young men belonging to the group of the *Guerre Sociale* turned out badly. One of the best known was the brilliant and unfortunate Miguel Almereyda, who was ruined by his expensive tastes and consequent need of money, and who eventually died in prison in mysterious circumstances. There was not the smallest evidence that he was guilty of treason, or that he knowingly received money from a German source, but it is certain that he was not particular where he got it from and was ready to adapt his politics to suit the persons that found it.

This little group was but an excrescence on French Syndicalism and, if I have said so much about it, it is only because its importance has often

been exaggerated and it is desirable to reduce it to its true proportions. Most of the Syndicalist leaders were men with disinterested motives and some of them were men of great capacity and intelligence. The great utility of Syndicalism lay in its repudiation of State monopoly and its insistence on the necessity of preparing the proletariat to use the power if and when it could get it. Too many Socialists have been disposed to imagine that all that was necessary was to capture the State either by parliamentary action or other methods and that the establishment of a Socialist society would follow as a matter of course. Lagardelle, who, although a prominent Syndicalist, never ceased to be a member of the Socialist party, said with truth in his famous discussion with Jules Guesde at the Socialist Congress at Nancy, in 1907, that a Socialist society would not issue ready-made from a revolution or from the capture of the machinery of the State. The workmen, he said, could not be ready at a moment's notice to replace the capitalists unless they had previously been prepared and a long preparation would be necessary. The proletariat must create with their own hands a whole system of institutions intended to replace the bourgeois institutions and he looked to the Trade Unions to accomplish that task.[1] This is sound sense: it is absurd to suppose that, if the proletariat were not already organised with a view to taking over production, the mere assumption of political power by a few Socialist politicians could effect any real change. A Socialist Parliament with a Socialist Government could not establish Socialism; society

[1] An important step in this direction has now been taken by the formation of an "Economic Council of Labour" composed of representatives of the C.G.T. and Government servants, engineers, teachers and others agreeing with its aims.

can never be transformed by Act of Parliament.

Simultaneously with the growth of Syndicalism the Socialist party became less and less reformist and more and more revolutionary. Jaurès, who had supported M. Millerand at St. Mandé in 1896, acquiesced in his entry into the Waldeck-Rousseau Cabinet chiefly because of the necessity of concentrating all the forces of the Left to defeat the anti-Dreyfusards and the Reaction. But when that task was accomplished the Socialist party refused to continue the policy of participation in a bourgeois Government, although it continued to act with the Bloc of the Left until 1906. M. Millerand had to leave the party, and when MM. Briand, Viviani, and Augagneur subsequently accepted Ministerial office, they did so without the permission of the party and were expelled from it in consequence. The amalgamation in 1905 of the two French Socialist Parties, that led by Jaurès and that led by Jules Guesde, brought together the two tendencies—the reformist and the revolutionary—and under the pressure of Syndicalism, the "unified Socialist party," as it was called, gradually abandoned reformism. The event has shown that the Syndicalist movement was both necessary and valuable, for it saved French Socialism from étatisme. The Socialist Party continued to advocate legal reforms as palliatives of the capitalist system, but it refused to follow the reformists in making such reforms the whole aim of Socialism in the belief that their extension would ultimately lead to a Socialist State. The Socialist Party in Parliament has, however, continued to attach too much importance to the immediate nationalisation of certain industries, which might possibly be suitably converted into public monopolies in a Socialist

society, but which the existing State is quite incompetent to manage. It was, in my opinion, a mistake on the part of the majority of the Socialist Deputies to support the purchase by the State of the Western Railway of France at a price which made the transaction a fraud on the taxpayers. When their attempts to get the price reduced had failed, they should have refused to take any responsibility for the purchase. Even since the war the Socialist Party in Parliament has demanded that the State should take over and run all the munition factories, and nationalise the railways, the mines, and the mercantile marine. It would certainly have been only right to force the owners of the munition factories to be content with a salary and perhaps a commission on production, but had the bureaucracy attempted to run the factories, the results would have been disastrous. If the railways, the mines, and the mercantile marine were converted into State monopolies in present conditions, they would certainly be grossly mismanaged and the discredit would fall on Socialism. The French Socialist party would do far more useful work and win much more credit if it left State monopolies alone and concentrated on such reforms as I have ventured to suggest in another chapter.[1] When we have arrived at a Socialist society it will be time enough to consider what industries, if any, should be public monopolies.

The war disintegrated both Socialism and Syndicalism. The majority of the adherents of both went at once to the Front and there was a sharp division of opinion in regard to the war among those who remained behind; both the Socialist Party and the General Confederation of Labour were split in two. Curiously enough, the Socialists

[1] See pp 113–130.

and Syndicalists that had been most extreme in their internationalism and even anti-patriotism became in many cases the most ardent supporters of the war; they persuaded themselves that it was a revolutionary war for the purpose of securing the universal triumph of democracy. This attitude was an interesting revival of the spirit that animated the Parisian Republicans and Revolutionaries from 1815 to 1870, when they were always clamouring for military crusades against monarchies and despotisms. Among the complex causes of the Commune of Paris in 1871 was the revolutionary patriotism which identified the cause of France with that of the Revolution and was disgusted at what it considered to be the pusillanimous policy of Thiers and the National Assembly. The revival of the same spirit among Socialists and Syndicalists in 1914 was not, therefore, very surprising, especially in the case of the older men. But nobody would have anticipated the entry into a bourgeois Government for "National Defence" of Jules Guesde, who had all his life been the strongest opponent of co-operation with bourgeois Governments or parties, had opposed the opportunism of Jaurès, and had declared with Karl Marx that the workman has no country. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of most of these sudden conversions—or reversions—but in some cases Socialists and Syndicalists of military age were induced to give a whole-hearted support to the war by a judicious distribution of exemptions from military service. Nobody was more bellicose than some of the "embusqués."

Until 1917 the supporters of war to the bitter end—the "jusqu'auboutistes," as they were called—retained the complete control both of the Socialist Party and of the General Confederation of

Labour, and were therefore called the "Majoritaires," but, as more and more men had to be sent back from the Front to the munition factories, the strength of the "Minoritaires" or Internationalists steadily increased and they were in a majority in the rank and file of the Socialist party long before they succeeded in capturing the organisation, which is now under their control. Indeed, the former "majoritaires" with very few exceptions, have returned to their old principles and policy.[1] Both the Socialist Party and the General Confederation of Labour are now once more definitely internationalist and revolutionary; their executives in May 1919 unanimously passed a vote of congratulation to the crews of the French warships who had hoisted the Red Flag in the Black Sea and undertook to defend them by every means in their power.

The war had the effect of bringing the Socialists and Syndicalists together and appeasing their differences. The division in their respective ranks in regard to the war itself helped to do that, for Socialist and Syndicalist "Majoritaires" acted together, as did Socialist and Syndicalist "Minoritaires." Moreover, the experience of the war has led to modifications of theory on both sides. On the one hand, as has been said, it has produced among the Socialists a strong feeling against Etatisme, for during the war France has had experience of the complete control by the State of industry and commerce, of importation and exportation no less than of production, and the

[1] At the national congress of the Socialist party in September 1919 an agreement was arrived at both as to the programme and policy of the party. But a considerable minority of the Extreme Left held aloof and will be useful in keeping the majority up to the mark.

experience has not been such as to make Etatisme popular. French industry is in the hands of a few consortiums of capitalists, which have become an integral part of the State and to which the State has delegated part of its powers. The last thing that they and the bureaucrats have ever considered is the interest of the wretched consumer. At the same time, the public money has been squandered with reckless disregard of the future on the consoling assumption that Germany would pay. Side by side with the growing feeling against Etatisme has developed the reaction against parliamentary methods already mentioned in a previous chapter, and an increasing tendency to count only or chiefly on direct action. In fact, French Socialism, particularly its rank and file, is becoming more and more *libertaire;* it has abandoned reformist and State Socialist theories and is returning to the conceptions of Marx and Engels, modified by recent experience. On the other hand, there is a distinct tendency on the part of Trade Unionists to modify the theory of pure Syndicalism and to recognise that it would put the consumer—that is to say, the community as a whole—at the mercy of any one group of producers. The time is therefore ripe for a synthesis between Socialism and Syndicalism and that synthesis will be arrived at. The relations between the Socialist Party and the General Confederation of Labour have again become a little strained, chiefly for personal reasons; but they joined together during the war in the Inter-Allied Socialist and Labour Conferences, and there is every reason to hope that they will unite in the formation of a new International.

Syndicalism, as we have seen, was in its origin simply a protest against the reformist tendencies

of certain leading Socialists. It can never come to terms with State Socialism, but its differences with Revolutionary Socialism are entirely concerned with questions of method and can easily be adjusted, especially now when the majority of Socialists in France have abandoned all hope of effecting anything important by parliamentary action. The Commune of Paris—which was the French Soviet—will in the future be the model for French Socialist action, as Engels said that it should be, and the Syndicalists may well rally to it. In the new synthesis between Socialism and Syndicalism the economic function of the State, or rather of the Administration, will be what the Manchester Liberals said that it should be—to protect the interests of the consumer. The State as an organ of administration will replace the State as an organ of authority; the administration of things will replace the government of men. Some means will be found of conciliating the interests of the community as a whole with those of each group of producers. That is the principal modification that will be necessary in the Syndicalist theory as set forth by Sorel in 1898—the defect of that theory was that it ignored the interests of the consumers, that is, of the community as a whole.[1] The principles of Socialism and liberalism are not so completely opposed as is commonly thought. There has been too violent a reaction in England from the doctrines of the Manchester Liberals, who were much more right than many Socialists imagine. They were right in saying that there should be as little government as possible; they were right in

[1] The national congress of the C G.T. held at Lyons in September 1919 modified the Syndicalist theory by accepting the joint control of industry by producers and consumers. This reconciles Syndicalism with Marxist Socialism.

saying that the only economic function of the State is to protect the consumers; even the doctrine of *laisser-faire* has much to be said for it. The State has been obliged to intervene to protect the worker from the results of the capitalist system, but in just and reasonable economic conditions that would no longer be necessary. The object of Socialism is to give as equal an opportunity as possible to every individual; there will never be absolute equality, for some individuals will always be more capable than others, but, if all start fair, it is to the general interest to let the best man win. The mistake of the Manchester Liberals lay in thinking that the best man would win in existing economic conditions and in supposing that in a system of private property liberty could ever be possible for the propertyless. Their principles applied to capitalist conditions meant misery for the majority of the population; Socialist conditions will make their application to a great extent possible, for the socialisation of the means of production is the only method of attaining individualism and economic freedom. The opposition of liberals to State Socialism is natural and reasonable, for State Socialism is as incompatible with liberty as is the capitalist system, and the servile State is no imaginary danger. But there is no incompatibility between liberalism and revolutionary Socialism. They agree in detesting authority, they agree in distrusting the State, they agree in making liberty the supreme ideal—absolute liberty in the expression of opinion, however dangerous, immoral, or blasphemous it may appear to the majority; in other matters a liberty necessarily limited only by the liberty of others. Socialism as a political creed is transitory; liberalism is eternal. For if and when a Socialist society is established there will be no

need of a Socialist party—the question will be no longer at issue—but there will always in any economic conditions be people that are on the side of authority and people that are on the side of liberty, those whose tendency is conservative and those whose tendency is progressive. Socialism might be liberal or anti-liberal, "libertaire" or "autoritaire"; it is much to be hoped that it will be liberal, and all the signs in France at any rate point to that.

At the very beginning of this book I said that there were signs in France that the present regime was nearing its end, and I have tried to show what those signs are and what are their causes. The question is, What will replace the present regime should it come to an end? The discredit into which French political institutions, and in particular the Parliament, have fallen might lead either to reaction or to revolution. If the matter rested with the bourgeoisie reaction would be certain. For several years before the war the bourgeoisie had been becoming more and more reactionary and anti-democratic, and this tendency had been particularly marked among the intellectuals. Some, like Brunetière and Coppée, turned to the Church as the last hope of authority; others, like Sorel, the first apostle of Syndicalism, became Royalists. The war has greatly strengthened the reaction. Dreyfusards like M. Joseph Reinach and M. Ernest Lavisse have vied with M. Maurice Barrès and M. Maurras in the violence of their Chauvinism and the fervour of their patriotic sentiments. The best evidence of the bourgeois reaction is the proposal of the majority of the Paris Municipal Council to erect a monument to the late M. Paul Déroulède, whose whole life was devoted to the advocacy of a war of revenge against Germany, and who was

banished for conspiring against the Republic. That proposal reveals the fact that in France, as elsewhere, there was a party that wanted war and that it was much stronger than was generally supposed abroad; indeed, I believe that it included the majority of the *rentier* class. The peasants and the proletariat were opposed to war, so were the financiers and the bulk of the industrial and commercial capitalists not interested in the production of war material, but the great metallurgical interest—the most powerful capitalist group in France—wanted war, and it had a large proportion of the *rentiers* on its side. Above all, it had the enthusiastic co-operation of the military interest and the General Staff. The great majority of French professional officers are reactionaries—a large proportion of them belong to the real or imitation noblesse, which despises industry and commerce and will not serve the Republic in a civil capacity. They hoped that the profession of arms might some day give them the opportunity of upsetting the Republic and they counted on a war as being likely to afford the best opportunity. This is no libel on the French reactionaries, for the design was openly avowed long before 1914 by M. Charles Maurras and other reactionary writers. The French militarists and reactionaries seemed to have been rendered powerless by their defeat in connection with the Dreyfus affair, and they became, indeed, unable directly to influence French policy; but, as I have said elsewhere, they succeeded in exercising influence indirectly through the intermediary of the Government of the Tsar, thanks to the close relations between the French and Russian General Staffs. It was, for instance, the French General Staff that originated the Three Year Service Law of 1913, but it was imposed on France by the Russian

[illegible]ent. When M. Viviani formed his first and [illegible]e Cabinet after the General Election of 1914, [illegible] Paléologue, who was then French Ambassador [illegible] Petrograd, attended the first Cabinet meeting and intimated to it that the Russian Government insisted on the maintenance of the Three Year Service. This insolent interference in the internal affairs of France caused the resignation of M. Georges Ponsot and M. Justin Godard, which led to the break-up of the Ministry. The Russian Government had then already determined to drag France into war; unhappily, it found in France itself politicians and journalists as well as soldiers only too willing to acquiesce in its designs. It was not for nothing that the Russian Government subsidised the *Matin*, the *Figaro* and certain other Parisian papers. One London paper at least shared in the largesse of the Tsar's Government and it is quite possible that there were others. The final triumph of French and Russian militarism and reaction was won at Versailles on January 17, 1913; from that day war was certain.[1] During the war militarism and reaction dominated France, and their domination became complete when they succeeded in putting M. Georges Clemenceau at the head of the French Government to carry out a policy in flagrant contradiction with the principles that he had professed throughout his long political career. I doubt whether the militarists and the reactionaries will surrender their power, if they can help it, without a struggle. They may take advantage of a moment of disorder due to the general discontent and the widespread misery that the war has caused in

[1] In the train from Versailles to Paris, on the evening of the presidential election, a well-known French writer said: "During the septennate of M. Poincaré we shall have first the Three Year Service and then war."

France to attempt a *coup d'état*. Whether such an attempt would succeed depends on the army; and I very much doubt whether the army would support it; even if it did succeed, it would not be long-lived, and would almost certainly be followed by a social revolution.

I am, however, disposed to think that the revolution will come without any intermediary stage. The economic and financial situation of France is such that no solution is possible except that of repudiation of the National Debt—and that means revolution and the end of the capitalist system. It is probably too late to avert revolution by constitutional and legislative reforms; the bourgeoisie has missed its chance, as did the noblesse of the eighteenth century, and the situation of the bourgeois Republic is as hopeless as was that of the Monarchy in 1789. The only possible chance of saving itself open to the bourgeoisie is that of immediately consenting to a large levy on capital, but I believe that it is too late even for that to save it, and in any case the French bourgeoisie will never consent to any pecuniary sacrifice. It is blinded by its avarice and egotism. Its representatives in Parliament can think of no better method of dealing with the situation than that of increasing indirect taxation in a country where the cost of living was in May 1919 four times as high as in 1910. Once more the bourgeoisie tries to shift the financial burden on to the backs of the workers, who are already hardly able to exist. Does history show any example of more blind, more crass stupidity? If the French bourgeoisie shares the fate of the noblesse, it may, indeed, be said to it: "Tu l'as voulu, Georges Dandin!"

The French Socialist Party has not, of course, abandoned parliamentary action. It issued an

electoral manifesto in preparation for the General Election of 1919, which contained a programme of immediate reforms, including an amendment of the Constitution. But that very manifesto said that reforms were not enough; as I have said in a previous chapter, it declared the necessity of a social revolution to be organised by the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is an admission that Socialism cannot be established by Acts of Parliament. If Socialism meant the transference of industry to the State, no doubt one industry after another might be nationalised by Parliament, but it does not mean that. It means the transference of the whole of industry to the control of the workers. Such a change cannot be effected in a piecemeal fashion; it is in itself a revolution and can be effected only by revolutionary methods. Persons calling themselves Socialists that are afraid of the word "revolution" are not Socialists but merely Etatistes. "Not revolution, but evolution," we are sometimes told, as if anything could be evolved out of its opposite. Socialism may be right or wrong, but, in any case, it is the exact opposite of capitalism and can no more be evolved out of it than a Republic can be evolved out of a Monarchy. The Monarchy must be abolished before a Republic can be set up, and capitalism must be abolished before Socialism can be established. Capitalism will never be abolished by an Act of Parliament. Seeing the enormous pull that the moneyed interests must always have in an election in our present social conditions, if only because elections cost so much money, I doubt whether a majority could ever be obtained at the polls for the abolition of capitalism. And if it were, the majority would be paralysed by the parliamentary machine and stifled in procedure and

standing orders. While time was being wasted over these formalities the capitalist classes would be organising forcible resistance. They would not restrict themselves to constitutional methods; they never have when their interests were seriously threatened. The men who used force to repress the revolutions in Russia and Hungary would not shrink from the use of force to repress a social revolution in their own country, even if it were being made by constitutional methods. But it never can be: a constitutionalist Socialist is a contradiction in terms; Socialists are out to destroy the whole constitution, economic and political, of existing society If and when the proletariat decides to act, it will not employ the cumbersome machinery of the parliamentary system when it has other and far more effective means at its disposal. The transformation of society is much more than a mere political change. Socialism involves the substitution of an economic for the political system of social organisation—of social for political democracy—and it can be brought about only by economic methods, not by political ones

Marx and Engels and the French Socialist Party are right: the dictatorship of the proletariat is the only method by which Socialism can ever be established. I know that the phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" makes the hair even of some worthy persons imagining themselves to be Socialists stand on end, but they will have to get used to it. And really there is nothing very terrible about it. It does not mean the permanent oppression of one class of the community by another, but is merely a temporary measure for effecting the transition from a capitalist to a socialist society—nothing more, in fact, than the application of the commonsense principle that a revolution can be made only

by people that believe in it and want it. In the nature of things the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be permanent, for in a socialist society the proletariat will cease to exist; there will be no proletariat and no bourgeoisie, but only one class, that of workers with hand or brain. The phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" must not be taken in too literal a sense, for the term "proletariat" in this connection includes all that are on the side of the proletariat. Lenin himself never belonged to the proletariat and, although I am a bourgeois, I hope not only to live to see the dictatorship of the proletariat, but also to have the honour of assisting in it. It means, in fact, no more than that during the transition from one state of society to another—that is to say, during the revolutionary period when rapid decisions will be necessary and time cannot be wasted on useless discussion—the anti-revolutionary minority must be excluded from the control of affairs, as the Royalists were excluded from the National Convention. There will, no doubt, be discussions and differences of opinion among the revolutionaries—probably too many of them—and the majority will have to decide, but time cannot be spent on discussing the revolution itself with people that are opposed to it. Moreover, although a Socialist society will not allow persons that will not work to starve, it will certainly not give them political rights, unless, of course, they are incapacitated from working by age or any other cause.[1]

Even if it be true that a majority for the aboli-

[1] The alleged atrocities committed in Russia are not a necessary result of the dictatorship of the proletariat. And, as Mr Arthur Ransome has said, before forming an opinion on what has happened in Russia, it is desirable to "demand something more to go upon than second-hand reports of wholly irrelevant atrocities committed by one side or the other, and often by

tion of capitalism could not be obtained at a general election, that does not prove that the majority of the proletariat would be opposed to Socialism. There is never a straight issue at a general election —the issues are always confused—and its result is less an indication of the real feeling of the majority of the country than a tribute to the ability of particular party wire-pullers. The English general election of December 1918 proved nothing except that Mr. Lloyd George is a very clever man; it certainly did not indicate the feeling of the country. One must not confuse the representative system with democracy—even mere political democracy. The present political system in England and France is not democratic even in the purely political sense; it is a device for persuading the masses of the people that they are ruling themselves when, in fact, they are being ruled by the capitalists. Somebody—was it Jean-Jacques Rousseau?—said that

neither one side nor the other, but by irresponsible scoundrels who, in the natural turmoil of the greatest convulsion of our civilisation, escape temporarily here and there from any kind of control." ("Six Weeks in Russia in 1919," Introduction, p. vi.). Mr Ransome himself has given us something more. It is no doubt true that there have been indefensible interferences with individual liberty both in Russia and Hungary, such as the refusal to allow any newspaper to be published without a licence from the Administration. But to describe such practices as "Marxist" is absurd; there is not a word in the writings of Karl Marx to justify them, nor are they in the least essential to the dictatorship of the proletariat as Marx and Engels understood it They are the result of a deplorable Jacobin spirit on the part of Russian and Hungarian revolutionary leaders, and they are likely to be as fatal to any revolution that persists in them as were Jacobin methods to the French Revolution. Not only is it indefensible on the part of Socialists to imitate the methods of despotic Governments, but it is also a profound mistake, as past experience has shown. Social democracy will never be successful unless it remains true to the principle of liberty. "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" are no doubt ideological abstractions in the mouth of a defender of bourgeois society, but Socialism can make them realities.

tive side of the revolution which must come first; the constructive work of the revolution will be done by the dictatorship of the proletariat, which will follow.

In the introduction to the German translation, published in 1891, of his book, "La Guerre civile en France," Engels said: "The German Philistines are always filled with a holy terror at the words: dictatorship of the proletariat. Would you like to know, gentlemen, what that dictatorship means? Look at the Commune of Paris. That was the dictatorship of the proletariat." I do not doubt, as I have said before, that the Paris Commune will be the model on which, in the event of a revolution in France, the dictatorship of the proletariat will be organised, with the necessary modification of representation by occupations. The autonomous Commune is the natural unit from which the Federative Communist Republic can be built up. We have failed to secure even political democracy because we have begun at the wrong end—with the State. Democracy must begin from the source, must start with the small local organisation, and the larger organisation must be formed by federating the smaller ones. That, in fact, is how the beginnings of democracy happened: the first embryo democracies were free towns, and it was a misfortune for the world when the free towns of Europe were absorbed into States and Empires. The States and Empires have grudgingly restored a certain amount of local liberty, varying in different countries, but the natural evolution of democracy was checked. In England the course of events was different: we invented national representative government, which other countries have imitated. It did valuable work in its time, but it is now out of date. A new beginning has to

be made: we must return to the free town and start with local liberty, building up from that international social democracy. The province will be a federation of free communes, the country a federation of free provinces, and the civilised world a federation of free countries. The commune will be completely autonomous in matters that concern itself alone; the province completely autonomous in matters that concern the collective interests of the communes of which it is composed; the country completely autonomous in matters that touch the collective interests of all its provinces. Neither will have any power outside its own borders; the country, like the province and the commune, will be an administrative area and no more. There will be boundaries, but no more frontiers, political or economic. Socialism will destroy, not only the capitalist system, but also the Sovereign Independent State claiming to be a law unto itself and to exercise authority even outside its own borders. Only on that condition will it ever be possible to get rid of war. Just as the absolute independence of the individual would be fatal to any social organisation, so the absolute independence of the State is fatal to international comity. Nationalism, political and economic, must be abolished if we want permanent peace, and Socialism proposes to abolish it. One of the excuses most often used by Governments for interference in other countries—that of the necessity of protecting their own subjects abroad—would be removed by international Socialism, for everybody would be the citizen of the place where he happened to be living, that is to say, the citizen of the world. The official commentary on the Covenant of the Holy Alliance called the League of Nations, said that "if the nations of the future are in the main selfish, grasp-

ing and bellicose, no instrument or machinery will restrain them." One might as well say—no doubt our remote forefathers did say—the same thing about individuals. Such an assertion is a denial of the possibility of any sort of social organisation and abandons the world to anarchy. There is no intrinsic impossibility in preventing war; the difficulty is that too many of those who profess to will the end do not will the means. Human beings, or many of them, will always be selfish, grasping, and bellicose—collectively even more than individually, for the collectivity is always inferior to the individual—and the way to prevent war is to arrange such conditions as to make it impossible. War would not be possible in a system of international Socialism in which armaments would be suppressed, the Sovereign Independent State destroyed and economic frontiers abolished by universal Free Trade; the countries would be so dependent on one another that none of them could afford to go to war. War between France and Germany would become as unthinkable as war between Lyons and Marseilles. It is the growing conviction that this is the only way of preventing war that has been one of the chief factors in the increase of Socialist and revolutionary opinions in France; the conversions to Socialism at the Front were innumerable.

Not idealism—or rather ideology—but realism is the basis of the revolutionary movement in France. Modern Socialism, especially in France, is not based on any belief in the perfectibility of human nature, but on a frank recognition of its defects. It does not count on a change of hearts. The people who say that nothing can be done by international organisation or changed economic conditions are not realists, but either fools or humbugs; in the latter case they say that nothing can

be done because it is not to their interest that the necessary measures should be taken. In fact, nothing can be done to improve the world except by economic measures; the only way in which human nature can be modified or ever has been modified is by food, climate and economic conditions. Morality, as anybody can see that chooses to use his eyes, is chiefly a matter of climate and environment, in so far as it is not a matter of good or bad taste. Climate and environment have altered racial characteristics and produced new races.[1] The economic interpretation of history remains the true one; every great movement in history has had an economic cause—I do not say as its only cause, but the economic cause always predominates. This truth is perhaps more readily grasped by the rationalist and realist French mind than by our more sentimental mentality, and that is one of the chief reasons why Socialism is gaining ground in France. The French proletariat has been sickened of ideology by that well-meaning bourgeois ideologist, Mr. Woodrow Wilson, whose ignominious failure is an example of the lamentable consequences of ill-informed sentimentalism and windy rhetoric, especially when they are combined with vanity and ambition. It is said that one of the reasons why Mr. Wilson yielded was that he feared a revolution in France if he retired from the Peace Conference. I should

[1] The most striking example of the superiority of climate and environment to race is, of course, the United States of America In spite of the fact that the population is a mixture of all the European races, a very definite racial type has been evolved, which has certain physical characteristics of the original inhabitants of North America, although there is hardly any Red Indian blood in the European population. These physical resemblances prove that the same conditions produce the same effects on persons of totally different races.

have supposed that the exigencies of his masters, the American capitalists, had more to do with it, but if Mr. Wilson was really influenced by the consideration mentioned, he is even less clear-sighted than I take him to be. The one chance of averting a revolution was to show that bourgeois society was not completely bankrupt, that it was capable of rising to the occasion. Had Mr. Wilson retired from the Peace Conference or, if necessary, resigned the Presidency of the United States, rather than compromise on matters of principle, he would not only have made a name in history, but would also have acquired immence influence on the masses of the people in France and elsewhere and they would have been willing to listen to him. As it is, his failure appears to the French proletariat as the final bankruptcy of bourgeois society. The capitalist Governments have shown that they are incapable of learning by experience, that they cannot free themselves from the old conceptions of absolute national sovereignty, strategic frontiers and territorial safeguards, that they have no vision of a new order, no idea of a better organisation of the world. They have made a peace treaty on the old lines, but, as its authors lacked the knowledge and skill of the great diplomatists of the past and were hampered by the necessity of paying hypocritical respect to formulas which they had accepted but in which they never believed, it is a clumsy compromise between contradictory principles. Metternich and Talleyrand would have done better; at least they would not have made arrangements so grotesque as those relating to Dantzig and the Saar Valley, of which the former was Mr. Wilson's own conception—the fact is a measure of his capacity as a statesman. Downright annexation would have been less dangerous to the peace

of Europe than these hybrid solutions. Mr. Wilson's League of Nations, for the sake of which the war was prolonged for nearly two years, differs from the Holy Alliance of 1815 chiefly in the fact that in the present case the small nations are harnessed to the chariot wheels of the five Powers banded together for the hegemony of the civilised world. When the representatives of the capitalist Governments signed the peace treaty with Germany at Versailles on June 28 1919, they signed the death-warrant of capitalist society; and the silly journalists that clamoured for what is called in America a "treat 'em rough" policy, were digging its grave. Blinded by hate, intoxicated by victory, learning nothing and forgetting nothing, destitute of a sense of realities, the bourgeoisie of the Allied countries has shown the proletariat that it is incapable of adapting itself to new conditions or of even grasping the data of the problems that lie before the world. Nay, it has gone back instead of forward: there was more internationalism and genuine liberalism in the Whig aristocracy of the early nineteenth century; Charles James Fox would have made a better peace than did Messrs. Wilson, George and Clemenceau. The reason why revolution is inevitable is that bourgeois society is degenerate and moribund. It refused to be saved by Mr. Wilson as it had refused to be saved by Lord Lansdowne; it must pay the penalty of its obstinate stupidity.

Although revolution must necessarily be the work of a minority, it is improbable that it will originate in the conscious determination of the Socialist Party or of any other group or individual. The forces which are leading to it are beyond the control of individuals. What I anticipate in France is the sudden expansion into a general revolu-

tionary movement of some ordinary strike due to a trade dispute. Only the resistance of the General Confederation of Labour to the pressure of certain Trade Unions and of the rank and file of the Trade Unionists prevented such a development of the strikes in France in June 1919. The national executive of the Metal-workers' Federation actually demanded a general strike, and the Metal-workers' Federation is the largest and most important Trade Union organisation in France. The General Confederation of Labour was vehemently attacked by the rank and file for its moderation. M. Dumoulin, a member of the executive of the Confederation, dealt frankly with the matter in *L'Humanité* of June 21, 1919. The C.G.T. could not, he said, allow individual Unions, however powerful, to precipitate a general strike or allow itself to be blinded by spontaneous impatience and irritation; it must await the right moment for action. I do not doubt that the C.G.T. was right; men with such a responsibility on their shoulders as have the leaders of French Trade Unionism may well hesitate to risk a movement of such a kind in any conditions that do not make its success almost certain. But the danger is that the spontaneous impatience and irritation of the rank and file may overwhelm the leaders and precipitate the movement, whether they like it or not. That has already occurred in the case of individual strikes; nearly all the recent strikes both in France and England have been spontaneous movements on the part of the rank and file, and some of them have taken the Trade Union officials by surprise. In France, as in England, the real leaders of the Trade Union movement are no longer the Trade Union officials, but the shop stewards (*délégués de l'atelier*), and the shop stewards in France, as in England, are mostly

revolutionary in feeling. In the spring of 1918 I was talking in Paris about the feeling of the proletariat to a distinguished man, not a Socialist, still less a revolutionary, who had been director of a State armament factory during the greater part of the war. He said that the workmen were even then in a state bordering on exasperation and that there was only one Trade Union leader in whom they still had confidence, because he had always been opposed to the war; but, he added, "il sera débordé" (he will be overwhelmed). In May 1918 his prophecy was already fulfilled to some extent by the general strike of the French munition workers, in opposition to the wishes of their Trade Union officials, at one of the most critical moments of the war; it was primarily a political strike—a strike in favour of ending the war. Now the exasperation of the rank and file is such that it is becoming increasingly difficult for the leaders to hold them back and at any moment all the Trade Union officials may be overwhelmed. There are too many causes of unrest and discontent: the failure of the hope of a lasting peace settlement; the continuance of conscription and armaments; the Allied intervention in Russia and Hungary; above all, the appalling cost of living. We have seen in a previous chapter that the cost of living is to a great extent the result of the deliberate policy of the Government of M. Clemenceau, which sacrificed the consumer to the interests of a few profiteers. So did it sacrifice the proletariat to the selfishness of the bourgeoisie, which refused to submit to an adequate income tax. The French proletariat and the French peasantry will not consent to be reduced to misery for generations in order to pay the interest on a national debt of nearly seven thousand million pounds. Sooner or later they will

decide to repudiate that debt, and that will be one of the causes of a revolution. France, in fact, is insolvent, and the only way out of insolvency is bankruptcy. There is intense bitterness at the way in which the French people has been deceived by successive Governments during the war, which have declared one after the other that Germany would pay all the cost of the war. M. Klotz actually said that so late as the spring of 1919, when the peace negotiations were in progress. Nobody believed it then, but during the war the one answer of the French bourgeois to anybody that suggested the desirability of counting the cost was: "The Germans will pay." The masses of the people, who knew nothing about financial matters, were equally deceived, with more excuse, and the illusion was one of the chief factors in inducing them to allow the war to go on to the bitter end. Now they see that Germany cannot pay more than a small fraction of the cost of the war and that the victory, which has cost so dear in blood and treasure, is indeed, as M. Clemenceau has said, a Pyrrhic victory for France. One of the most striking symptoms of a new spirit is the tendency, already mentioned, of the salaried bourgeoisie to combine with the proletariat. Paris saw in 1919 the novel spectacle of 25,000 bank clerks on strike marching down the Grand Boulevard. A theatrical Trade Union has been formed which includes all that get their living by the theatres and music-halls, from the scene-shifter to the leading lady. The book illustrators and caricaturists have also combined and, like the bank clerks and the theatrical Trade Unionists, affiliated their Union to the General Confederation of Labour; the Unions of the printing trade have promised them their special support The Association of Government Officials

has demanded the right, now denied to it by law, to convert itself into a Trade Union affiliated to the General Confederation of Labour, thus following the example of the elementary school teachers and of the employees of the Postal, Telegraphic and Telephone services. This awakening of those classes of the bourgeoisie that live wholly or chiefly by their own earnings to the fact that their interests are the same as those of the proletariat is of great significance and cannot fail to have important results.

These are the factors that make for revolution in France. It is impossible not to feel grave anxiety about the situation. The C.G.T. is right to be prudent, but it must not forget that courage is as necessary as prudence, and that, although it is wise to wait for the right moment, it is necessary to recognise it when it has arrived. Should there be a spontaneous upheaval, it might, unless there were men ready to take control of the movement and organise the revolution, end in nothing but futile violence and ruthless repression. A revolution would be useless unless there were men commanding the general confidence of the proletariat and capable of organising the new social conditions. The crisis may produce the men, but at present one would find it difficult to name them. There is nobody in France who commands universal confidence as Jaurès did. There has not been a moment during the last five years at which his loss has not been felt: never was it more sensible than now. No event has been more disastrous to France in the last half-century than the murder of her greatest statesman by a miserable fanatic, egged on by the reactionaries and militarists. The acquittal of the murderer, Villain, on the ground of his patriotic motives by a bourgeois jury was,

after all, consistent enough. Both Villain and the jury are typical representatives of the devotees of that worst of all religions, whose cardinal virtues are vanity and hate, which is red in tooth and claw with the blood of the youth of Europe. But what a manifestation of stupidity was that verdict of twelve representative bourgeois! What a valuable exposure of the dupery of the "Sacred Union"! The densest individual in the French proletariat can no longer doubt who are his real enemies.

Irreparable as was the loss of Jaurès, nevertheless there are many men of courage and capacity among the leaders of French Socialism and Trade Unionism and in the rank and file; neither ability nor character is lacking. There is, then, ground for hope that, when the moment comes, the men also will be forthcoming. Perhaps some of them will be men at present almost unknown.

CHAPTER VIII

BACK TO VOLTAIRE

"The France of Voltaire and Montesquieu—that is the great, the true France"—ANATOLE FRANCE.

THAT Anatole France was right in saying that the true France is the France of Voltaire is my firm conviction. Voltaire was the typical Frenchman of the best kind with the typical French qualities and weaknesses; only in his case the qualities were developed to so rare a degree that they obscured the weaknesses. Rationalist, sceptical, even cynical—if it be cynical to see things as they are—he was at the same time intensely affectionate and his benevolence was almost unlimited. He had a passion for justice and spent half his life, at constant risk to himself, in defending the victims of injustice; only his marvellous ingenuity enabled him to escape the risks that he ran. His immense tolerance was perhaps the result of his cynicism, for after all what is called a cynical view of human nature leads to a tolerant and benevolent attitude. It is those who expect too much of human nature that are severe on themselves and their fellow-creatures. Beware of a man who is hard on himself, says Anatole France, he may hit you by mistake. Voltaire's tolerance finds its highest expression in the famous sentence of his letter to Hel-

vetius: "I wholly disapprove of what you say and will defend to the death your right to say it." His "Treatise on Religious Toleration" is a noble and moving appeal.

And to what a remarkable degree Voltaire possessed that typical French quality of sound good sense! He was essentially a realist—a practical man, not in the least an ideologist. He never pontificated or posed as a High Priest of Humanity, but how completely human he was! French, too, were his mocking irreverence, his refusal to allow that anything is sacrosanct; the shafts of his ridicule and his biting wit pierced all the traditions and the conventions. Hypocrisy has had no more deadly foe. Irreligious by nature because so profound a believer in reason, he was perhaps made anti-religious only or chiefly by the hateful intolerance of the Church, of which the murder of the Chevalier de la Barre was a typical example. But Voltaire also saw, just because he had so clear a vision, that there can be no reconciliation between reason and faith and that the progress of humanity depends on the triumph of reason. Perhaps one of the most convincing proofs of his greatness is the fact that, in an age when war was looked upon as a matter of course and blessed (as it still is) by the official representatives of Christianity,[1] he alone exposed with scathing irony its brutality and stupidity, the hypocrisy of the pretexts on which it is waged. "Candide" remains the most damning indictment of war ever written. In many respects Voltaire was a prophet; although he was no revolutionary, his was one of the principal influences that led to the Revolution, for his exposure of the cruelty of

[1] There are exceptions, of course, among whom it is only just to mention the most important—the present Pope.

the *ancien régime* led to its destruction and his ruthless criticism of existing beliefs and traditions undermined them. All the authors of the Revolution were inspired by Voltaire with the passion for reason, justice, liberty, and toleration; Jacobinism, as has been said, was the child of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in so far as it was not the inevitable result of circumstances.

The clear intellect of Voltaire found expression in his limpid prose, French prose in its purest form. Few writers attain that simplicity which he achieved, a simplicity which is a difficult art to acquire; perhaps in the nineteenth century only Anatole France has achieved it, for the prose of Renan, beautiful as it is, is of a more florid type. Voltaire would not have been a typical Frenchman if his works had been free from "gauloiserie," which is a characteristic of nearly all that is greatest in French literature, from the mediæval tales and Rabelais to Anatole France. Indeed, one of the greatest liturgical scholars of our time once told me that there were distinct traces of "gauloiserie" in the French liturgies of the early middle ages. To be sure, it existed in English literature as well until Victorian squeamishness expelled it; the bawdy has had an irresistible attraction for humanity in every age and in every country. The more it is repressed the more attractive it becomes—that is why the English like nothing better than being shocked. Squeamishness has its price: it has, for instance, ruined caricature in the country of Hogarth, Gillray, and Rowlandson, for the essence of caricature is brutal frankness. Frankness is a French quality and Voltaire possessed it to the full. We may be proud of the fact that Voltaire loved England and was indeed greatly influenced by English literature, which he

knew thoroughly. He lived in England for nearly three years and spoke and wrote our language fluently. Newton was one of his heroes and he had an even exaggerated admiration for John Locke. "I have been your apostle and your martyr," he wrote to Horace Walpole; "it is not fair that the English should complain of me."[1] Walpole had criticised Voltaire for having ventured to suggest that Shakespeare, for whom he had an intense admiration, was not without faults. The "Letters Concerning the English Nation," which Voltaire wrote in English and published in London in 1733, show how great was his affection for the country and the people.

Voltaire was not, however, typical of all Frenchmen; he may represent—I believe that he does represent—the "great, the true France," but there is another. Pascal is also a typical French intellect of another kind, typical but at the same time exceptional, for Pascal, like Voltaire, was a genius. His anticipation of the theory of evolution—"after all, nature was perhaps only a first habit"—was as remarkable as his anticipation of Pragmatist philosophy, for Pascal came very near to Pragmatism. His apologetic really amounted to the argument that, since we do not know whether there is a God or not, it is safer to assume that there is one, for, if we be mistaken, it will make no difference, whereas, if there be a God, we shall be on the right side; on the other hand, if we have denied the existence of God and there should happen to be one, we shall have a very uncomfortable time. It is not heroic, but it is eminently practical and is a manifestation in its way of French good sense. Pascal, like Voltaire, was a

[1] "Voltaire in His Letters," translated with a Preface and Forewords by S. G. Tallentyre (John Murray), p. 217.

master of irony and the Jesuits have never really recovered from the terrible exposure of the "Provincial Letters," but I confess that it always seems to me that there was a good deal of the Jesuitical in Pascal himself. And he sometimes gives the same impression as Newman—that the person whom he was principally trying to convince of the truth of Christianity was himself. Chateaubriand and Joseph de Maistre were other types of the religious Frenchman. Chateaubriand was a brilliant writer and an unscrupulous humbug, who never really believed in anything but himself. His vanity and disloyalty were shown by his conduct in 1824 towards Villèle, of whose Cabinet he was a member, and by the way in which, three years later, he coquetted, for personal reasons and out of hatred for Villèle, with Bonapartists and Republicans and thus helped to bring about the downfall of Charles X. He was, in fact, a great man of letters and an intriguing politician. Joseph de Maistre, on the contrary, was a perfectly sincere reactionary and fanatic, who would gladly have burned all the enemies of the Church as well as all Republicans and Democrats; he was a man of remarkable gifts, probably the ablest and most powerful defender of Catholicism and reaction in France in the nineteenth century. De Maistre was the typical French Ultramontane and represented the forces that were dominant in the French Church throughout the nineteenth century and are now more dominant in it than ever. For since the separation of Church and State the French Church has been purged of all its elements with liberal or democratic tendencies.

Lamennais and Montalembert were the protagonists of what was called liberal Catholicism in the thirties and forties of the nineteenth

century. Montalembert had sincere liberal inclinations, and he had the sense to recognise the disastrous consequences that the policy of the Vatican and the Ultramontanes would have in France; he died a bitterly disappointed man with dismal forebodings about the future of the French Church, which have since been fully justified. But Montalembert supported a "freedom of education" which consisted in exempting priests and male and female members of religious Orders from all the qualifications required from lay teachers in schools, and, with Falloux and Thiers, he initiated in 1848, after the establishment of the Second Republic, reactionary measures quite incompatible with liberalism or democracy. His liberalism, like that of all liberal Catholics, had considerable restrictions. Lamennais was an emotional person with many attractive qualities, who began by being an ardent and intolerant theocrat; the failure of his absurd dream of reconciling the Papacy and democracy and his condemnation by the Pope drove him out of the Church, and he became a democrat and a republican. His was an essentially religious character, more so, in fact, than that of Joseph de Maistre, who, like the majority of Ultramontanes, was really concerned chiefly with the Church as a political institution. Lamennais regarded the Church as a great moral and religious force and was astonished to find that the Pope did not agree with him; the astonishment betrayed a certain *naiveté* in his character. Another leading liberal Catholic was Lacordaire, who is alleged to have said on his death-bed: "I die a penitent Catholic and an impenitent liberal." Lacordaire, like Montalembert, abandoned what they called "the fatal alliance between the Throne and the Altar," when he saw that it was ruining

the Church. In a famous sermon preached at Notre Dame in 1835, Lacordaire said: "I have the greatest possible respect for the old Royalist Party, the respect that one feels for a veteran covered with glory. But I cannot rely upon a veteran whose wooden leg prevents him from scaling the heights up which the new generation is pressing." He was promptly suspended by the Archbishop of Paris. The liberal Catholic movement was condemned by Rome, but in any case it would probably have failed to make much impression on the French people. It was under the suspicion of being concerned principally with the interests of the Church, and the suspicion had some justification. Montalembert and Lacordaire aimed at founding a Catholic Party in politics, which should be liberal and democratic—up to a certain point—but which would inevitably be obliged to put the interests of the Church before everything. All similar movements in French Catholicism since that time have had the same fate; they have all been suspected by the public and condemned by the Pope.

Lamennais, Montalembert, Lacordaire are memories of the past; Joseph de Maistre and Chateaubriand still live, for their spirit is that of the majority of French Catholics. Nor is the influence of Pascal entirely extinct—I do not mean his influence as a man of letters, which will never die, but his influence on French Catholicism. To this day one can detect a strain of Jansenism in really religious French Catholics; at least there is a strain of Puritanism. The religious history of France has been a strange one. France was at one time within an ace of becoming a Protestant country. The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes crushed the Protestants or sent them into exile—to the

great economic and intellectual loss of the country—but right up to the Revolution a large number of families of the noblesse were still Protestant. Most of them, however, rallied to the Catholic Church when, at the Revolution, its cause became identified with that of the Monarchy and the noblesse. French Protestantism was of the most severe type, for it was Calvinist. It is not then surprising that there is Puritanism in France. Moreover, Puritanism is not at all exclusively Protestant; it has always existed in Christianity. St. Paul was something of a Puritan, and St. Augustine, the spiritual ancestor of Calvin, was one of the most rigid Puritans that ever lived. At no time in its history has the Catholic Church been free from Puritanism. I knew a Frenchwoman who would not take her daughters to call at a house where there was a reproduction of the Venus of Milo in the drawing-room; she was quite in the Catholic tradition, for the Church forbade the representation of the nude in art until the Renaissance. That is the spirit of Puritanism, which regards natural instincts as immoral and hates the human body as a vehicle of sin. The lives of the saints are full of it. St. Aloysius Gonzaga, the pattern of youth in Jesuit schools, never allowed himself to see his own body naked—he contrived somehow to put on his night-shirt in bed before removing his under-clothes. The same gentleman was so pure that he would not look his own mother in the face for fear he should be tempted to sin. In many French convent schools the pupils are forbidden ever to be naked even for the purpose of washing and, if they take a bath, are obliged to wear a garment covering them from head to foot; a nun is present to see that they do not lift it up. The discouragement of cleanliness is another form of

contempt for the human body. A friend of mine was in his youth at a French Catholic school where the boys were allowed to wash their feet only once a month—they never had a bath. When a deputation waited on the Superior with the plea for more frequent foot-baths, he replied that he would favourably consider the matter, but he himself saw no necessity for a change, since he had not taken a foot-bath for twenty years. He was perhaps a disciple of St. Benedict Joseph Labre, the patron saint of filth and fleas. Catholic Puritanism is not perhaps exactly of the same kind as Protestant, but it is sometimes even worse. The immense success of Jansenism in France showed that the really religious people among the French have a tendency to Puritanism, although Puritanism was far from being the whole of Jansenism.

The majority of French Catholics, however, are not religious in spirit any more than other Frenchmen. The non-religious character of the French is perhaps one reason why Catholicism—and Ultramontane Catholicism—has ultimately triumphed over other forms of religion and all attempts to replace it have failed. "There is not enough religion in France to make two," Talleyrand is said to have remarked; the late Archbishop of Albi quoted the remark to Pius X, when the latter asked him whether there was any danger of a schism resulting from the separation of Church and State. Catholicism is religion in its simplest form—the propitiation of a deity by the performance of certain rites—and, in spite of Jansenism and numerous other attempts to alter its character, that form has persisted. The obligation of going to Mass once a week and to confession and communion once a year does not unduly tax the least religious

grnnortals. A low Mass lasts from twenty to t'enty-five minutes and, whereas it was once held hat in order to hear Mass one must arrive before M Gospel, it is now considered sufficient to arrive Chore the Canon or even before the consecration. ɪhe Franciscans in the Middle Ages started the convenient theory that one heard Mass in a Franciscan church, if one arrived before the "Ite, missa est," with which it concludes, and thereby filled their churches to the detriment of the parish churches and the indignation of the secular clergy. This theory must still have partisans in France, for on any Sunday morning one may see large numbers of men arriving at the Madeleine just before the end of the eleven o'clock High Mass. They wait at the bottom of the church to watch the women go out, and very agreeable acquaintances, I am told, have often been made in this way. The English Catholic is a very different person from the Catholic of a Catholic country; he takes the whole thing seriously, as Aeneas Piccolimini (afterwards Pius II) said with contemptuous pity of the Irish of his day. The Catholic of a Catholic country—at any rate in France and Italy—is always exercising his ingenuity to sail as near the wind as possible—to get round the laws of the Church or to discover the least that he can possibly do to comply with them. He has the valuable aid of the moral theologians, who have, for instance, decided in France that a water-fowl is fish and may, therefore, be eaten on a day of abstinence. So the wealthy French Catholic, whose delight it is to dine as sumptuously as he possibly can on a Friday without breaking the laws of the Church, eats wild duck with a clear conscience. This spirit of *frondisme* is, as I have remarked in a previous chapter, very common among Frenchmen in general—they

love to evade rules and regulations; it is, of course, a natural reaction from respect for authority.

The Catholic Church, however, is not primarily a religious, but a political organisation, and that is the chief reason why it retains a certain hold in France. The Church is the last hope of the reactionaries. Nobody can come into contact with French Catholics without noticing how very little interest most of them take in religious matters. The majority of Catholic men, at any rate, rather accept the dogmas of the Church than believe in them; they swallow them whole, so to speak, and think no more about them for the rest of their lives. That is the case with the most intellectual of them. Pasteur, for instance, was a practising though never a devout Catholic, but everybody that knew him agrees that he never exercised his intellect on religion; he put it in a separate compartment of his brain and left it there without ever attempting to make a synthesis between it and his other quite inconsistent beliefs. Possibly it was merely the externals of religion that appealed to him. That is quite an intelligible attitude—indeed, one of my friends is always regretting that it is not possible to retain the externals of Catholic ceremonial and get rid of everything else. Purely external conformity is very common in France. The so-called "Modernist" movement was an attempt to revive Catholicism as a living religious force and to make a synthesis between it and contemporary thought. The Modernists were of various kinds: some were interested in philosophy, some in biblical and historical criticism, some in political and social questions. According to their interest, they attempted to reconcile Catholicism with contemporary philosophy, with the results of historical criticism, or

with democracy. One of the most distinguished Modernists was M. Alfred Loisy, the eminent historical critic, who was finally excommunicated and is now professor of the history of religions at the Collège de France. The majority of the Modernists were men of strong religious feeling, more so than most orthodox French Catholics. Some of them believed that Catholicism in its present form could not last, and aimed at a means of breaking the fall, so to speak, and preventing the collapse of Catholicism from leading to general irreligion. But these were not in the majority; the prevalent tendency was to believe in the possibility of restatement of Catholic dogma as would enable the Church to survive. It was the dream of Lamennais over again in a different form. The philosophical side of Modernism was based to a great extent on Pragmatism and on the philosophy of M. Bergson; it was strongly anti-intellectualist. Faith was to be saved by being entirely separated from reason and put on a different plane. "Le cœur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît pas," had said Pascal, in this, as in so many other respects, a forerunner, and that sums up the Modernist philosophy. It was in reality the old heresy of "fideism" in a new form. Some Modernists carried symbolism to extremes; they believed that it would be possible to retain Catholic dogmas and the Catholic rites while giving them all a purely symbolical meaning—to believe, for instance, in the Virgin Birth of Jesus in some symbolical sense, while admitting that it was not an historical fact, and to continue to go to Mass without believing in the magical rite. Some few Modernists went so far as to hold that it did not matter whether Jesus had actually existed or not, since in any case one could worship the symbolical Christ. They were certainly

mistaken: such an attitude may be possible for a few highly intellectual individuals with vivid imaginations, but it could never be that of a popular religion. The French peasant would not continue to go to Mass if he ceased to believe in the magical power of the priest, and would not continue to worship the Host unless he believed it to be God. He has, in fact, ceased to a great extent to go to Mass because he has ceased to believe in these things. It would be useless to explain to him that he ought to go on worshipping the Host because the fact that the worshippers concentrate their attention on it and accept it as the symbol of God makes it equivalent to God for them. I remember many attempts to induce M. Loisy to organise a symbolical cult, but with his French good sense he invariably refused.

The Modernists were a small band of sincere and disinterested men, who were doomed to failure. The Pope was right from his point of view to condemn them, for, although they would probably have succeeded in prolonging the existence of Catholicism for a certain time and would certainly have preserved religious feeling to some extent, they would inevitably have destroyed the Papacy. Their ideas were incompatible with absolute authority. The Papacy may, indeed, be destroyed in any case, or at least sink into complete insignificance, but it was natural that it should prefer to take the risk of what the future may have in store for it rather than accept certain extinction. Moreover, the condemnation of Modernism is not to be regretted. All the attempts, however sincere, to adapt the Church to democracy or to reconcile it with science only serve to confuse people's minds and to obscure the incompatibility of Catholicism with both. The condemnation of Modernism, as

was sudden; he fell dead, in fact, while in the act of drinking a glass of wine at a meal. But he had been ill for months and had known that he *might* die at any moment and, had he remained a believing Catholic, he would certainly have received the sacraments during that time. Some of the political Catholics have gone to extremes. M. Maurras, for instance, calls himself an atheist Catholic; he wrote in the *Action Française* a famous article expounding his conception of "Catholicism without Christ," which the *Croix*, one of the leading Catholic papers, declared to be thoroughly Catholic in spirit. M. Maurras objects, in particular, to the ethical teaching of the Sermon on the Mount.

When the war broke out practising Catholics over the greater part of France were chiefly to be found in the bourgeoisie and the peasantry, and among them the proportion of women was at least ten to one. The number of men that are Catholics in any sense—even a purely political one—can be fairly accurately gauged by the result of a general election, for the vast majority of Catholics vote for reactionary candidates. There are certain country districts where most of the peasants still go to Mass but nevertheless vote Republican, but they are rare and are counterbalanced by the Freethinkers in the bourgeoisie that vote reactionary. The popular view of the matter was expressed in the remark of the wife of a village mayor in the Sarthe some three years ago. "Ah, sir," she said, "the day of M. Poincaré's election I felt sure that no good would come of it: the curé was so pleased." At a general election the avowed reactionaries usually poll about one-eighth of the total number of votes cast and that pretty well represents the proportion of men in France that have Catholic sympathies; the propor-

tion that "practise" is much smaller. Fourteen or fifteen years ago one of the French Bishops estimated the number of persons, including children, who attended Mass at all, however irregularly, at about eight millions, or twenty per cent. of the population. Since then attendance at Mass has steadily diminished, especially in the rural districts. Visitors to Paris may easily be misled in this regard by the crowded congregations in the fashionable churches. But, on the one hand, the women and children of the upper and middle bourgeoisie go to Mass as a rule, and on the other there are comparatively few churches in Paris. When the Separation Law was passed, in 1905, the average population of a Parisian parish was over 36,000; it is now rather smaller, as a few new parishes have been formed. The difference between London and Paris in this regard is very great, especially when one takes into account that in London the Anglican churches are not even a majority of the places of worship, whereas in Paris there are only a handful of Protestant temples and Jewish synagogues in addition to the Catholic churches.

In this, as in other regards, circumstances differ in different parts of France. The most religious districts of the country are the north—French Flanders—and the west—Normandy, Brittany and the Vendée. The south as a whole is irreligious, and so is Central France; there are whole departments where the village churches are nearly empty, and some of them are even closed altogether for lack of a congregation. One of the most striking symptoms of the last few years is that even the women in many rural parts of France are ceasing to go to Mass. The number of people that still allow their children to be baptised and to make

their First Communion and that go to the Church for marriages and funerals is much larger than the number of those that actually practise, especially in the rural districts. First Communion survives to a considerable extent because it is a social function; for a girl it is a sort of "coming out." The children are feasted, are given lots of presents, go about visiting their relatives for a couple of days in their First Communion costumes, and generally have a good time, so that they are not pleased if their parents' principles prevent them from having these enjoyments. But I once heard a priest remark that his chief thought at a First Communion was how very few of the young communicants he would ever see at the altar again. In a very large number of cases the First Communion is also the last. In the towns the masses of the people are abandoning even the practice of having their children baptised, and purely civil marriages and funerals are very common. The civil marriage is the only marriage recognised by French law, and the religious ceremony, if any, must follow it. Towns differ, of course, in this respect: for instance, Catholics are stronger in Lille and Lyons, particularly the former, than in any other large town, although still a comparatively small minority. On the other hand, I found that in a country town of about 5,000 inhabitants in the department of the Yonne forty per cent. of the funerals were civil—an unusually large proportion in the country.

Many people thought that the war would lead to a great revival of religion; indeed, writers like M. Paul Bourget and General Cherfils hailed it on that account. M. Bourget exclaimed in the *Echo de Paris* early in the war: "Ne trouvez-vous pas que nous vivons plus, nous vivons mieux?" and

General Cherfils, who is an ardent Catholic and reactionary, wrote of the war as "this healthy blood-letting which will regenerate us." Such pronouncements would perhaps have been more seemly if it had been General Cherfils' blood that was being let out and if M. Bourget had been in the trenches, where people were not living either more or better. But they were both waging war in arm-chairs. At the beginning of the war there were certainly more people in the churches, or, at any rate, many people went to church more often. That was to be expected; people always invoke the help of Heaven when everything else has failed. Great hopes were raised by the fact that many of the soldiers consented to wear blessed medals, although in most cases they did so to please a female relative, or an army chaplain, or even an officer, for some of the officers used their position to promote their own opinions. There was also the feeling that a medal could not do one any harm and might by some remote possibility do one good; there is latent superstition in every one of us and the belief in charms still survives. But at the beginning of the war there was undoubtedly a certain revival of religious practice at the same time as an outbreak of superstition of every kind. Serious daily papers published prophecies, the spuriousness of which has long since been demonstrated—even our old friend St. Malachy was resuscitated by the *Figaro*—and soothsayers, fortune-tellers, mediums, and clairvoyants did an enormous business. The revival, however, has not lasted, and I am disposed to think that the net result of the war has been a diminution of religious belief and practice. It has, of course, had different effects on different people, but there can be no doubt that the war has brought out in full relief the extreme difficulty of believing

in a God who is at once omnipotent and benevolent. The difficulty existed before, but the great catastrophe has made many people realise it for the first time, and a large proportion of them have come to the conclusion that it is insurmountable. A considerable number of women have abandoned their religion in consequence. As for the soldiers, any tendency that there might have been among them to take refuge in religion has been checked by the extreme indiscretion of the Catholics themselves, especially some of the ladies of the Croix Rouge. Deep resentment has been caused by the pressure put upon wounded soldiers in hospitals to receive the sacraments or to go to Mass; the pressure has often gone to the length of giving or withholding favours, according as the men complied or not with the demands. Some officers have also ordered their men to hear Mass or used pressure upon them to do so; there were cases where officers stood at the door of a church to note what men came and put a black mark against the others. In the French army there is no church parade, and attendance at Mass is purely a personal matter; men that wish to go are given the opportunity when it is possible. Nothing could be more calculated to put French soldiers against religion than the fact that their officers attempted to impose it on them. They often went to Mass with fury in their hearts. I was told by a Catholic officer, who was himself shocked at the occurrence, that nearly all the men in a certain regiment received communion one day in order to placate their commanding officer, although most of them had never communicated, at any rate since they were children, and some were not even baptised. It is usually safe in France to count on the stupidity of the clericals; the Republic has more often been saved by it than by the

wisdom of the Republicans and the Church has suffered from it again and again. The first thing that the ladies of the Croix Rouge did in a certain place on taking possession of a public building which had been granted for a hospital was to remove the bust of the Republic, by way, no doubt, of showing their enthusiasm for the "Sacred Union." In another case, when the Chant du Départ was being sung, a priest gave instructions that the first line of the chorus, "La République nous appelle," should be changed, in defiance of metre, to "La patrie nous appelle." These puerile manifestations are typical of the mentality of the French clerical.

On the whole, then, it is probable that the Church has lost rather than gained by the war, although it is difficult to form a definite opinion. The enormous sale of M. Henri Barbusse's books supports that view, for they have been violently denounced by all the Catholic and patriotic Press, and M. Barbusse is intensely anti-religious. My belief is that he represents a very large proportion of the young men that have served in the war. Although books about the war do not as a rule appeal to men that have served in it, "Le Feu" was very widely read at the Front, and I have never met a soldier who did not declare it to be the most true description of the war. It had the immense advantage of being written by a private soldier, whose experiences and point of view are very different from those of the officer. The probable effect of the war on thought in general is another question of great interest. Before the war there had been a philosophical as well as a religious reaction among the bourgeoisie. The fashionable philosophy was that of M. Bergson, which influenced many of the younger men in the upper

and middle bourgeoisie, and there was a strong reaction against the rationalism and intellectualism of the previous generation. I am not competent to express an opinion on the merits of Bergsonism as a philosophical system; I can only judge it by its practical results, about which there can be no doubt—M. Bergson's influence has made almost entirely for political and religious reaction. This result may have been quite other than M. Bergson desired or intended—indeed he probably had no intentions in the matter, for a philosopher is not concerned with such considerations. Pragmatism has been exploited in France to bolster up every kind of superstition; naturally so, for if anything is to be accepted as true that is useful to humanity —that "works"—one has only to hold that a superstition of any sort is useful to humanity to be justified in defending it. No doubt Pragmatism has been abused and made to cover all sorts of opinions that its prophets would never have allowed to be justified. For many people it means that anything is true which they find it convenient or comfortable to believe. It has even been used to deny the existence of positive knowledge and to justify the theory that facts are not a matter of evidence. Thus Catholics have maintained that the question of the existence of Jesus or of his crucifixion is not a matter of historical evidence. The late Lord Acton once said to me that Roman Catholics were people who believed facts to be matters of opinion and opinions to be facts; some Pragmatists seem to be of much the same mind. Nothing could be more convenient for the religions than a theory which dispenses with historical evidence. I do not say that the Pragmatist philosophers would themselves defend such a theory, but many of those who profess to be their disciples

do. Judged by its practical results, Pragmatism is a dangerous system; it has undermined the sense of truth in many of its adherents and led to intellectual insincerity. In fact, it is really a denial of the existence of truth. I remember a young and ardent follower of M. Bergson calmly telling me that of course the present economic system was not to the advantage of the proletariat, but it was to the interest of society that they should be made to believe that it was. People are already too much inclined to ignore facts and need no encouragement in that regard. And who can say what is really to the advantage of the human race? It is a matter of opinion. It will not really be possible to apply the Pragmatist test of truth until the end of the world, and then there will be nobody to apply it. A witty profesor at Harvard who was at once a personal friend and a philosophical opponent of William James once suggested to the latter a new form of oath to be taken in law courts by Pragmatist witnesses. It ran thus: "I swear to tell what is expedient, the whole of what is expedient and nothing but what is expedient, so help me Future Experience." That is really the last word on the subject. Even if it be true, for example, that we have to assume as a working hypothesis that we and other people possess Free Will, that does not prove that we actually possess it. It only proves that it really does not matter in the least whether we possess it or not, and as we can never find out, it is a waste of time to bother ourselves about it. The appeal from Pragmatism is to ordinary good sense: there are certain things that are ascertainable because they are questions of evidence; there are certain things that are not ascertainable and never will be. When Dr. Johnson struck the earth with his walking stick and

found it solid, that did not prove, as he seems to have imagined, that matter really exists, but it did prove that it does not matter whether it exists or not. Nobody has yet bettered the definition of the metaphysician as "a blind man in a dark room looking for a black cat which isn't there." We can all make our own guesses.

One cannot help having a certain suspicion of a philosopher whose lectures are attended, as were those of M. Bergson before the war, chiefly by fashionable ladies. The attraction was, I imagine, M. Bergson's theory of intuition. Women usually claim to have more intuition than men—the claim may be justified, for all I know—and the theory flattered them. Besides, nothing can be more comforting than the notion that by intuition we can get further than all the great psychologists and other men of science, for everybody has intuition to some degree, and the great advantage of the theory is that it seems to dispense people from the necessity of any kind of work or study. Theories that save trouble are always popular, and a smart woman is naturally gratified at the idea that she can know more about psychology, for instance, than Dr. Pierre Janet. That, I fancy, is one reason, at any rate, why M. Bergson's lecture-room at the Collège de France became the best place in Paris for observing the latest fashions in hats. As I have said, I am no metaphysician and approach the subject merely from the point of view of the plain man. From that point of view any philosophy that tends to the disparagement of reason is pernicious, and, whatever M. Bergson may desire, his philosophy has that tendency. That we are all of us usually guided by impulse rather than by reason is too true, but it is not a matter for satisfaction; all progress has been the result of the correction of

impulse by reason, which, after all, is the only thing that distinguishes us from other animals. As for intuition, by what test can it possibly be tried, who is to decide between the various intuitions of various people? The Church itself has had the good sense to recognise the difficulty by refusing to allow the revelations experienced by saints to be imposed as matters of faith. Be that as it may, of one thing there can be no doubt, namely, that, as I have said, those who have been influenced by M. Bergson are reactionaries to a man. He has been one of the strongest reactionary forces in France during the present century. I frankly admit that that fact is enough for me, and Pragmatists, at any rate, must admit the validity of the test.

The Church, however, has officially refused the aid that M. Bergson's philosophy seems to give it. It condemned the Modernist adaptations of Bergsonism, and I am not sure that some of M. Bergson's works are not on the Index. This may seem stupid, for undoubtedly Bergsonism is the forlorn hope of those who wish to save Catholicism for intellectuals; it is indeed probably the only means by which Catholicism can be justified to the modern mind. For the supposed historical facts on which Christianity has hitherto been based have nearly all been annihilated by historical criticism and only a system which dispenses with facts can save it. Yet I am not sure that Rome was wrong in the matter. It must always be remembered that Rome is above all practical, that its point of view is political—I use the term in its widest sense—rather than religious or theoretical. Catholic Rome has retained the qualities of pagan Rome to a remarkable degree; it has "put on Christ" as one puts on a garment,

but underneath it remains the same. Ancient Rome was essentially practical, not metaphysical or theoretical. The practical good sense of pagan Rome survives in Catholic Rome and makes it regard with suspicion any attempt to provide a new apologetic. For it knows that the safest plan is to leave things alone and that, if it once allowed Catholics to begin inquiring into the origin of their religion or the philosophical basis of their belief, it would be all up with it. There are still large numbers of people ready to open their mouths and shut their eyes and swallow the pill whole; the number is no doubt diminishing, but so much the worse, any other system would mean the end of Catholicism. And Rome knows perfectly well that, even if Bergsonism kept and perhaps keeps a certain number of intellectuals or would-be intellectuals in the Church for the present, it will never keep the masses of the people in it. On the contrary, if priests were allowed to begin expounding a Pragmatist or Bergsonian apologetic, those of the masses of the people that still remain in the Church—a small minority in France, but not in some other backward countries—would soon go out of it. They stay because they believe the whole of Christian mythology to be literally true—I am speaking of those who still have the faith; there are, of course, some who continue to go to Mass by habit or tradition without really believing. Rome also knows that Bergsonism will go out of fashion and that good sense will reassert itself in an intellectualist revival; what would then happen to those who had rejected the intellectualist basis of Catholicism? Therefore Rome remains firmly intellectualist; the whole system is perfectly logical and consistent if one only admits the premisses; the one thing necessary is to prevent anybody from inquiring into the

validity of the premisses. It is more easy to do that than it would be to build up anew on a fresh foundation.

There are signs already of an intellectualist and rationalist revival in France. It was always inevitable, the French character being what it is. Bergsonism is essentially un-French, although "Propaganda" during the war has been circulating at the public expense pamphlets written to prove that M. Bergson is the only true and lineal philosophical descendant of Descartes and that his philosophy is the complete synthesis and final expression of all French philosophical tradition. Why this thesis should have formed part of the French official war propaganda is not evident, but probably the explanation is the mission to America with which M. Bergson was entrusted by the French Government during the war. He went to stir up a warlike spirit and to promote American intervention, and he seems to have manifested a Chauvinism of the purest brand. American liberals speak of his activities in their country without amenity—according to them he supported the most reactionary elements in America and appealed with the skill of an accomplished demagogue to the worst passions of the multitude. M. Bergson had already shown diplomatic skill in connection with his candidature for the Academy. He wrote a letter to a Jesuit in which he expressed the opinion that his work, "Creative Evolution," logically tended towards the belief in a personal God. The Academy is a *bien-pensant* and reactionary body, which attaches great importance to the opinions of its members. That is, no doubt, the reason why most of the great French men of letters during the past century have not been Academicians and why the Academy is now—with a few brilliant excep-

tions such as Anatole France, Mgr. Duchesne, Henri de Regnier and M. Bergson himself—a collection of mediocrities. How Anatole France ever became an Academician is a mystery, but he was elected before the Dreyfus affair; he would never have been elected had he been presented after it. Perhaps M. Bergson's diplomatic activities have not improved his credit, but the reaction that I have mentioned is due to other causes. The war has produced, at any rate in those who have taken part in it, a sense of realities, which is impatient of metaphysical discussions and philosophical systems. Above all, it has shown the disastrous results of impulse and religious feeling—for patriotism is a true religion—and the importance of reason. Reason has been completely dethroned during the war, and the consequences have not been good for the world. So far as my experience goes, the young French intellectuals have come back from the Front convinced rationalists. M. Barbusse's latest book, "Clarté," is symptomatic; the future probably lies much more with his point of view than with that of M. Bergson. A philosophy which commended itself to rich idle women is hardly likely to appeal to men that have had so terrible an experience of realities. Probably M. Bergson's influence in France has always been in great measure due to his great literary gifts; he writes a beautiful style and has remarkable lucidity of expression. Perhaps it is chiefly as a man of letters that he will live. But men that have been through this war need something more than literature. They know that ignorance, illusions, romantic beliefs made the war and will make other wars unless they are subdued by reason and positive knowledge. Like Simon Paulin in M. Barbusse's book, they want clarity—

positive facts, not metaphysical speculations. And their nearness to death for five years has emphasised the supreme importance of life. It is not they who will "bring us back to God," as Mr. Britling fondly imagined; rather do they say, with Simon Paulin, "Je ne vois pas Dieu. Je vois partout, partout, l'absence de Dieu." For no succour came to them from an indifferent and neutral Heaven. They see that Christianity and Patriotism justify war and make its continuance possible by teaching that the dead are better off than the living and that it is a happy thing to die young for one's country. Those lies have been the excuse of the callous indifference of the old to the slaughter of the youth of Europe and have been the sedative which has prevented revolt against the great atrocity. The priests of Christ and the priests of Mars—the two functions have often been united in the same individuals—have glorified and encouraged war by preaching its ennobling and purifying effects. Did not an Anglican bishop declare that he had never felt so near to Christ as at the Front? The men that have been through the war and not merely "seen it through" have seen through the romantic disguises in which war has been decked out in order to get civilised humanity to tolerate it. They will have none of the illusions that have made men slaves and sent them to kill one another without knowing why. "Il le faut, tu ne sauras pas,"[1] say religion and patriotism. They reply: "We will not; we will know." The war has thrown everything into the melting-pot: all the established beliefs and traditions which were accepted without inquiry. Henceforth there will be an increasing number of men that will ask "why" before they accept anything, before they

[1] "Clarté," by Henri Barbusse, p 179, &c.

submit to anything that may be imposed upon them as a self-evident duty. They will appeal to reason against faith and tradition.

Therefore is the spirit of the true France coming into its own again, and the young intellect of France is returning to the rationalism of Voltaire. The philosophy of the drawing-rooms belongs already to the past. It was an agreeable pastime for people with too much to eat and nothing to do—the sort of people who in England and America dabble in Christian Science—but it is out of date in a time when hard facts make themselves disagreeably insistent. Before long perhaps it will not be possible to eat at all without doing something; such conditions will be favourable neither to Bergsonism nor to Christian Science. The conviction is growing among the men in France that have been through the war that war is the inevitable result of certain social and economic conditions, and that what nineteen centuries of Christianity have failed to do may be done by economic changes. So we come back once more to the predominance of the economic factor in human affairs. The revival of Rationalism can only aid the triumph of Socialism.

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